

GRAMMAR OF THE YIDDISH LANGUAGE

Dovid Katz



Duckworth

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	xiii
Foreword	xv
Introduction	xvii
Abbreviations	xxiii
Alphabet chart	xxiv

1 THE ALPHABET

1.0	Overview	1
1.1	The Yiddish writing system	1
1.2	The Yiddish alphabet	3
1.3	Deletion of redundancies	19
1.4	Coexistence of the two systems	19
1.5	Modern standard orthography	20

2 PHONETICS

2.0	Overview	25
2.1	Vowels and diphthongs	25
2.2	Consonants	29
2.3	Rhythm	34
2.4	Dialect variation	38

3 GREETINGS

3.0	Overview	41
3.1	Time-related greetings	41
3.2	General greetings	43

4 NOUNS

4.0	Overview	47
4.1	Gender	47
4.2	Plurals	53
4.3	Diminutives	63
4.4	Compound nouns	70

5 NOUN PHRASES

5.0	Overview	75
5.1	Case	75
5.2	Indefinite articles	78
5.3	Singular definite articles	78
5.4	Plural definite articles	81
5.5	Singular adjectives	81
5.6	Plural adjectives	85
5.7	Predicate adjectives	85
5.8	Adjectives following the noun	87
5.9	Adjective quantifiers	89

5.10	Comparative adjectives	90
5.11	Superlative adjectives	92
5.12	Special types of adjectives	94
5.13	Diminutives of adjectives	95
5.14	Nouns that inflect for case	97
5.15	Possessives	100

6 PRONOUNS

6.0	Overview	103
6.1	Personal pronouns	103
6.2	Possessive pronouns	108
6.3	Demonstrative pronouns	112
6.4	Partitive pronouns	117

7 VERBS

7.0	Overview	121
7.1	The infinitive	121
7.2	The present participle	122
7.3	The verbal additive	123
7.4	Negation	126
7.5	Present tense	126
7.6	Past tense	131
7.7	Minority past tense	134
7.8	Pluperfect past tense	137

7.9	Future tense	138
7.10	Immediate future tense	139
7.11	Pluperfect future tense	140

8 PREFIXED VERBS

8.0	Overview	141
8.1	Unstressed prefixes	141
8.2	Stressed prefixes	144
8.3	Perfective vs. naked verbs	154

9 ANALYTIC VERBS

9.0	Overview	156
9.1	Specialized analytic verbs	156
9.2	Inherently analytic verbs	172

10 ADVERBS

10.0	Overview	178
10.1	True adverbs	178
10.2	Adverbs from adjectives and nouns	179
10.3	Relic adverbs	181
10.4	Adverbs from prepositional phrases	185
10.5	Diminutives of adverbs	187
10.6	Psychoadverbial inserts	188

11 QUESTIONS

11.0	Overview	195
11.1	Intonation	195
11.2	Inversion	196
11.3	Interrogative plus inversion	197
11.4	Interrogative additives	200

12 NUMBERS

12.0	Overview	201
12.1	Cardinal numbers	201
12.2	Ordinal numbers	204
12.3	Fractions	206
12.4	The alphabetic numbering system	208

13 TIME

13.0	Overview	213
13.1	Life	213
13.2	Time	215
13.3	The calendar	218
13.4	Use of prepositions with expressions of time	220
13.5	The Jewish calendar	221

14 SYNTAX

14.0	Overview	224
14.1	The inflected-verb-second rule	224
14.2	Basic sentence order: noun plus inflected verb	225
14.3	Word placement in basic sentence order	225
14.4	Inverted sentence order: inflected verb plus noun	229
14.5	Word placement in inverted sentence order	237
14.6	Predicatives	241
14.7	Relatives	245
14.8	Reflexive constructions	247
14.9	The double verb construction	249
14.10	Variability of word order	250

15 SEMANTICS

15.0	Overview	252
15.1	'At'	252
15.2	'From'	253
15.3	'Go'	253
15.4	'Know'	253
15.5	'Love'	254
15.6	'Paper'	256
15.7	'Party'	257
15.8	'Question'	257
15.9	'Right'	258
15.10	'Sense'	258

15.11	'Solution'	259
15.12	'Tell'	259
15.13	'The'	259
15.14	'Think'	260
15.15	'Time'	261
15.16	'To'	261
15.17	Jewish vs. general	262

16 PHRASEOLOGY

16.0	Overview	268
16.1	Similes	268
16.2	Rejoinders	270
16.3	Satiric characterizations	271
16.4	Proverbs	273
16.5	Redundant intensifiers	275
16.6	Historical metaphors	275
	Select bibliography	277
	General index	285
	Grammatical index	286
	Index of selected Yiddish items	288

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The author alone assumes responsibility for shortcomings as well as for the opinions inherent in the presentation.

Oxford, February 1987

David Katz

FOREWORD

The *Grammar* was prepared with a dual readership in mind. The first intended users are university students enrolled in Yiddish language courses. Ideally, the qualified teacher will converse extensively in Yiddish from a very early stage of the course while supplying genuine literary texts. Lessons can be chosen as necessary from various sections to suit the requirements of the course. In place of 'fill in the blanks' exercises, it is recommended that students be asked to write original sentences and compositions on the basis of a selected section. The dictionaries recommended for use alongside the *Grammar* are Bergman's at an elementary stage; Weinreich's at a more advanced stage; and Harkavy's at a still more advanced stage at which the student is reading from works of Yiddish literature on his or her own (see 'Dictionaries', p. 277). Reading may be culled from any of a number of anthologies or readers (see 'Anthologies', pp. 278–279), or better still, from original works of modern Yiddish masters selected by the instructor.

The second intended user is the more advanced student or general reader who requires a reference grammar either to help master the language or as a work to be consulted as necessary.

Suggestions for improvements in future editions may be sent to the author at the Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies, 45 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW, England.

INTRODUCTION

Yiddish was created some thousand years ago by a Jewish minority population that had resettled from the ancient Near East to medieval Central Europe. Although it almost never enjoyed official government status, it thrived and was spoken and written by millions over a vast European territory, and gave rise to a substantial literature. Over the past century, Yiddish was carried to many parts of the world by East European Jewish immigrants and their descendants. Discovered only recently by large numbers of West European and American readers, Yiddish literature has assumed an international position, not least in consequence of its portrayals of the specifics of East European Jewish culture and the more universal implications of that culture.

Yiddish was never the language of all world Jewry. It is, rather, the traditional lingua franca of the *Ashkenazim*, the descendants of the makers of the medieval Jewish civilization that arose on Germanic-speaking territories. The name derives from the medieval Jewish term for those territories, *Ashkenaz*. With the early migrations of large numbers of Ashkenazim as far south as Italy, as far north as Holland and as far east as Russia, Yiddish spread over much of Europe, far beyond the Germanic-speaking lands.

Yiddish entails an intricate fusion between its three major components — the Semitic component deriving from the Hebrew and Aramaic of the ancient Near East that the first settlers in Ashkenaz brought with them; the Germanic component from the medieval Germanic lands where Yiddish was born; and, over the last few centuries, a Slavonic component in Eastern Europe. The two

previous Jewish languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, that the first settlers had brought with them, fused with a number of local varieties of medieval German city dialects deriving from the Upper and Central German areas. Statistically speaking, the greatest part of both the vocabulary and the morphological and syntactic machinery of the language is Germanic. Nevertheless, even the Germanic component of Yiddish is not congruous with any one German dialect, while each Yiddish dialect remains systematically relatable to any other Yiddish dialect. To the historical linguist, this is evidence of a Yiddish speech community that interacted with other far-away Yiddish-speaking communities vastly more than with the neighbouring speakers of the local or national non-Jewish languages. Yiddish linguistics focuses on the unique and creative ways in which the disparate parts of Yiddish combine to form a powerfully expressive language. Its major registers feature human sensitivities, logical precision and a sense of humour emphasizing irony and satire.

The origins of Yiddish literature are still somewhat obscure. Traces of written Yiddish go back to the eleventh century. The earliest extensive manuscript bearing an explicit date is from 1382. Appropriately enough, many of the early Yiddish literary manuscripts represent interaction of the ancient but always evolving Jewish culture of the day with selected trends from contemporary Western civilization. One of the favourite early genres is the extensive epic poem. In a number of surviving Yiddish manuscripts, medieval romances such as *King Arthur* are adopted from German models. In many others, however, the European epic is the form applied to such traditional Jewish motifs as the Biblical books of Samuel and Kings. In others still, both European form and content are reworked into a highly original Yiddish masterpiece. The best known example is *Bovo d'Antona* (Bovo of

Antona), written by the great Yiddish poet (and Hebrew and Aramaic grammarian and Yiddish etymologist) Elijah Levita (1469 – c. 1549), better known in Yiddish as Elye Bokher. In this first application of the masterly Italian ottava rima (abababcc) in any Germanic language, Elye Bokher took as his immediate source *Buovo d'Antona*, an Italian romance, which is itself closely related to the English *Beve of Hampton*.

All these works were written in various forms of *Western Yiddish*, the collective name for the Yiddish dialects of Central Europe. With the advent of printing, Yiddish literature was launched for a pan-European market of readers. Largely to this end, writers and publishers consciously evolved a standard written form of Yiddish, based upon the western dialects, that would be intelligible to all readers. This standard, clearly discernible in the 1540s, when Yiddish printing really got off the ground (although a handful of prints are extant from the 1520s and 1530s), survived right up until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

By the late eighteenth century, Western Yiddish, centred in Germany, had begun to decline, largely in consequence of the demise of Western Ashkenazic culture and the linguistic assimilation to German of the Western Ashkenazim who were becoming simply 'German Jews'. In the Slavonic and Baltic lands, by contrast, *Eastern Yiddish* flourished as it never had before, and Eastern Europe remained the heartland of Yiddish until the Holocaust. Following its conscious elevation to a status of sanctity by the mystical Chassidic movement of the eighteenth century, the literary and social functions of the language expanded to suit the needs and wishes of the diversified literary, cultural and political movements of nineteenth-century Jewish Eastern Europe. The *Haskóle* (Haskalah), or enlightenment movement, and the Zionist (and Hebraist), Socialist and Yiddishist movements in all their

colourful variety, made extensive literary use of Yiddish as a means of communicating their philosophies.

By the early nineteenth century, there were clear examples of the emerging new standard language, based upon the eastern dialects. Reformist writers of varying cultural persuasions did away with Western Yiddish archaisms that had long been in disuse, and evolved the modern literary standard that is based on the thriving Yiddish of Eastern Europe. Traditionally, the credit for forging a unified literary language from the dialects of East European Yiddish is assigned to the 'grandfather of Modern Yiddish literature' – Mendele Moykher Sforim (pen name of Sholem-Yankev Abramovitsh, c. 1836 – 1917). His two fellow classicists in the triumvirate of nascent modern Yiddish literature are humorist Sholem Aleichem (Sholem Rabinovitsh, 1859 – 1916) and romanticist Y. L. Peretz (1852 – 1915)

Within the European Jewish community, Yiddish was, up until the modern era, one of three Jewish languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Yiddish – which complemented each other in a stable interrelating system of intracommunal languages. In addition, of course, all members of the community had knowledge of one or more non-Jewish coteritorial languages. The Yiddishist movement, a child of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Jewish Eastern Europe, has sought consciously to enhance the role of the everyday spoken language of Ashkenazic Jewry. For many years, pro-Yiddish sentiment was severely opposed by both assimilationists who sought to supplant Yiddish with the national languages of the countries in which Jews lived, and the Hebraists, who sought (and in Israel, succeeded) in reviving ancient Hebrew as an everyday spoken language. There are almost infinite combinations of love, hate, jealousy and ambiguous love-hate toward Yiddish. For many centuries, the three Jewish languages of Ashkenaz had lived in

harmony; suddenly, two of them were proclaimed sworn enemies by their adherents. The 'language controversy', as it is usually called, burned most passionately in the waning nineteenth and the early twentieth century. The third Jewish language of Ashkenaz, Aramaic, was spared from conflict because of its lack of widespread active usage. It is the most elite of the three Jewish languages of Ashkenaz, written and studied only by the most educated, the scholars of two great branches of Jewish learning and literature created in it, the Talmud (Jewish law) and Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism).

The modern literary language, known as Standard Yiddish, has drawn upon the resources of all three major East European dialects of Yiddish: Mideastern Yiddish (popularly 'Polish'), Southeastern Yiddish ('Ukrainian') and Northeastern Yiddish ('Lithuanian'). Standard languages generally come into being as a result of sociological and geocultural factors, not via mathematical equations giving everybody an equal share. Standard Yiddish pronunciation is far closer to Northeastern Yiddish, especially as cultivated in its centuries-old cultural capital, Vilna, than to any other dialect. In grammar, the historical sources of the standard are spread rather differently among the dialects, and if anything, the standard is furthest from Northeastern usage. Hence the popular conception that Standard Yiddish is a 'compromise' between Northeastern pronunciation and Southern (i.e. Mideastern and Southeastern) grammar, while a vast oversimplification, is none the less largely accurate.

ABBREVIATIONS

adv.	adverb
cf.	compare
e.g.	for example
esp.	especially
f.	feminine
i.e.	namely; that is
inf.	infinitive
lit.	literally
m.	masculine
M.E.	Mideastern Yiddish ('Polish')
n.	noun
N.E.	Northeastern Yiddish ('Lithuanian')
pej.	pejorative
pl.	plural
sg.	singular
S.	Southern Yiddish (= Mideastern Yiddish plus Southeastern Yiddish)
S.E.	Southeastern Yiddish ('Ukrainian')
trans.	transitive
v.	verb
var.	variant form

ALPHABET CHART

Name	Printed Form	Script Form	Transcription
áləf	א		—
pásekh áləf	ⴌ		[a]
kóməts áləf	ⴍ		[o]
beyz	ב		[b]
veyz *	ⴎ		[v]
giml	ג		[g]
dáled	ד		[d]
dáled záyin shin	דיד		[j]
hey	ה		[h]
vov	ו		[u]
tsvey vovn	וו		[v]
vov yud	וי		[oy]
záyin	ז		[z]
zayin shin	זי		[zh]
khes *	ח		[kh]
tes	ט		[t]
tes shin	טי		[tsh]
yud	י		[y] / [i]
tsvey yudn	יי		[ey]
pásəkh tsvey yudn	יײ		[ay]
koí *	כ		[k]
khof	כּ		[kh]

lángər khof **	ך	𐤊	[kh]
láməd	ל	𐤌	[l]
mem	מ	𐤍	[m]
shlósn mem **	ם	𐤏	[m]
nun	נ	𐤎	[n]
lángər nun **	ן	𐤐	[n]
sáməkh	ס	𐤑	[s]
áyin	ע	𐤒	[e] / [ə]
pey	פ	𐤓	[p]
fey	ף	𐤔	[f]
lángər fey **	ף	𐤕	[f]
tsádik	צ	𐤖	[ts]
lángər tsadik **	ץ	𐤗	[ts]
kuf	ק	𐤘	[k]
reysh	ר	𐤙	[r]
shin	ש	𐤚	[sh]
sin *	ש	𐤛	[s]
tof *	ת	𐤜	[t]
sof *	ת	𐤝	[s]

* occurs in the traditional system only

** final form of preceding

1 THE ALPHABET

1.0 OVERVIEW

The Yiddish alphabet, written from right to left, is an evolved form of the ancient Semitic alphabet. Two systems of spelling coexist within it. The greatest part of the language is spelled according to the **phonetic system**, which features one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. The minority Semitic component of Yiddish, deriving from Hebrew and Aramaic, is spelled etymologically according to the **traditional system**. A number of variations may be encountered in Yiddish spelling. The most widely used system is **modern standard orthography**. Other systems are used by certain communities.

1.1 THE YIDDISH WRITING SYSTEM

The Yiddish writing system is a variant of the Hebrew and Aramaic alphabet. Like all Semitic-derived scripts, it is written and read from right to left. Semitic alphabets are originally consonantal. Explicit letters to mark vowel sounds are absent. They are not necessary for native speakers of Semitic languages, where the three-consonant Semitic root itself signifies membership in a family of related words. Skeletal consonantal spellings are therefore perfectly comprehensible. When in the histories of these languages (not infrequently because of their demise as vernaculars and their

perpetuation as liturgical or classical languages), it did become necessary for literary or educational purposes to mark vowels, this was usually accomplished by the addition of a system of diacritic marks (or 'points') below or above the line. The history of the Yiddish alphabet reveals creative reworking of an Eastern cultural phenomenon – the ancient consonantal Semitic alphabet – to match a Western reality – a European language for which the representation of vowels is crucial.

1.1.1 The phonetic system

The phonetic system of Yiddish spelling generally provides a perfect one-to-one correspondence between letter and sound. It is used for the non-Semitic parts of the language, hence for the vast majority of words. It has evolved through many intermediate stages and a few regressions. Over the past thousand years, Yiddish has increasingly made use of those letters that had lost the phonetic consonantal values they once had in Hebrew and Aramaic, especially *álef* (→ §1.2.2, 1.2.3) and *áyin* (→ §1.2.24) and put them to work as full-fledged vowel letters, instead of introducing sublinear or supralinear points and dots). The two vowel diacritics that are retained *kómets* (= [o]) and *pásek* (= [a]) are both confined to specific letters (*Ḥ* = [o] → §1.2.3; *Ḥ* = [a] → §1.2.2 and *Ḥ* = [ay] → §1.2.17); hence they too are in effect parts of vowel letters rather than free-floating vowel points that can be affixed at will to any consonant. In short, Yiddish has evolved a Western type alphabetic structure in which both consonants and vowels are marked by letters, while preserving the form and direction of the inherited Semitic alphabet.

1.1.2 The traditional system

The traditional system governs the orthography of the Semitic component within Yiddish, comprising several thousand words, nearly all of which are spelled historically, that is to say, as they are spelled in Hebrew or Aramaic. The correspondence between the traditional system and the vocabulary derived from Semitic would be perfect were it not for a handful of words of Semitic origin that have come to be spelled according to the phonetic system (e.g. טאָמער 'if; in case') – and an even smaller handful of non-Semitic component words that have realigned themselves to the traditional system (e.g. male forename קלמן [kálmən]). For those who know Hebrew, mastering the traditional system poses no problem. For others, the spelling of each Semitism must be learned along with the word, although certain master patterns will become evident.

1.2 THE YIDDISH ALPHABET

The alphabet (or *alef-bet* as it is also known, from its name in Yiddish – אָלף־בֵּית) derives from the classic twenty-two Semitic letters. The number of symbols in Yiddish is increased by the word-final forms of the five letters that have them (ב → word-final ם, ה → ן, ג → ך, ז → ן, צ → ן), and the spirant counterparts of four plosives (cf. ב [b] vs. ן [v], כ [k] vs. ן [kh], פ [p] vs. ן [f], ת [t] vs. ן [s]). The number of functions is increased first by the various combinations of letters that Yiddish makes use of to effect complete coverage of the sound system of the language, and secondly by the use of one symbol for more than one function where the true function may be deduced from position in the word. The printed and script forms of each

letter, and its phonetic transcription in Latin characters, are provided. The transcriptions, enclosed in square brackets [], represent a modified version of the transcriptional system of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research, which was designed for English speakers. Where the transcription differs radically from accepted phonetic transcription, the international phonetic equivalent follows in parenthesis. Yiddish handwriting is frequently characterized by flamboyant strokes above and below the line for the risers and descenders (often extending higher and lower than risers and descenders in English). Where possible, the samples provided illustrate usage in initial, medial and final position.

1.2.1 ן




Print: ן Script: ן (or ן)

ן has no phonetic realization. It has two functions.

1.2.1.1 ן to avert ambiguity

ן systematically averts ambiguity by distinguishing consonantal ן (tsvey vovn = [v] → §1.2.10) before and after vocalic ן (vov = [u] → §1.2.9) and before diphthongal ן (vov yud = [oy] → §1.2.11).

SAMPLES OF ן TO AVERT AMBIGUITY

וואו		[vu]	'where'
פּרוּוואו		[pruʋa]	'try'
וואוינען		[vóynən]	'live (= dwell)'

1.2.1.2 ן to mark word, syllable and stem onset

ן marks the onset of words, syllables and stems that begin with the vowels

ו (vov = [u] → §1.2.9), וי (vov yud = [oy] → §1.2.11), י (yud = [i] → §1.2.15), יי (tsvey yudn = [ey] → §1.2.16), and יי (pásakh tsvey yudn = [ay] → §1.2.17).

SAMPLES OF ׀ TO MARK WORD ONSET

און		[un]	'and'
אוי		[oy]	'Oh! Oh dear!'
אין		[in]	'in'
אייביק		[éybik]	'forever'
אייז		[ayz]	'ice'

SAMPLES OF ׀ TO MARK SYLLABLE ONSET

אומרוויק		[úmruik]	'restless'
אסאציאירט		[asotsiírt]	'associated'
פֿעאיק		[féik]	'skilful; capable'
קאָנטינוואָם		[kontinúum]	'continuum'

SAMPLES OF ׀ TO MARK STEM ONSET

פֿאַראייניקן		[faréynikn]	'unite (v.)'
באַאיינפֿלוסן		[baáyinflusn]	'influence (v.)'
ריבאייזן		[ríbayzn]	'foodgrater'

Note: Word, syllable and stem onset are *not* marked by ׀ before the vowels ׀ (pásakh álef = [a] → §1.2.2), ׀ (kómets álef = [o] → §1.2.3) or ׀ (áyin = [e] → §1.2.24), hence:

אַוועק		[avék]	'away'
אָן		[on]	'without'
עסן		[ésn]	'eat'

1.2.2 **pásakh álef**

Print: א

Script: אַ

Realization: [a]

SAMPLES OF אַ

אַלע		[áɫə]	'all'
זאַך		[zakh]	'thing'
נאַ		[na]	'here!'

1.2.3 **kóməts álef**

Print: װ

Script: װַ

Realization: [o] (= ɔ)

SAMPLES OF װַ

װן		[on]	'without'
װאָס		[vos]	'what'
דװ		[do]	'here'

1.2.4 **beyz**

Print: ב

Script: בַּ

Realization: [b]

SAMPLES OF בַּ

בױם		[boym]	'tree'
אַבער		[óɸər]	'but'
װײַב		[oyɸ]	'if'

1.2.5 **veyz**

Print: ױ (/ב/)




Script: ױַ

Realization: [v]

ױ occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [v] is

rendered by ף (tsvey vovn = [v] → §1.2.10).


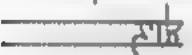
SAMPLES OF ץ

בבלי		[bóvɫ]	'Babylonia'
חברה		[khéyɾə]	'group of friends; crew'
אנא		[áɣəv]	'by the way'

1.2.6 giml

Print: ג. Script:  Realization: [g]


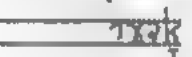

SAMPLES OF ג

גוט		[gut]	'good'
באגיסן		[bag(ɪsn)]	'spill (on top of ...)'
אויג		[oyg]	'eye'

1.2.7 dáiḇd

Print: ד. Script:  Realization: [d]

SAMPLES OF ד

דארטן		[dórtɒn]	'there'
אָדער		[óɖər]	'or'
באד		[bod]	'(Turkish) bath'

1.2.7.1 dáiḇd záyin shin

Print: װ Script:  Realization: [j] (= ʃ/dʒ)

װ functions as a single consonant.

SAMPLES OF װ

דזשין		[dʒɪn]	'gin'
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דזשענעלֿך	
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1.2.11 vov yud

Print: ף Script: 𐤔 Realization: [oy] (= ɔ)

SAMPLES OF ף

אויס	𐤔	[oys]	'finished!; it's all over!'
חויז	𐤔	[moʏz]	'mouse'
שטרױ	𐤔	[shtroy]	'straw'

1.2.12 záyin

Print: ז Script: 𐤆 Realization: [z]

SAMPLES OF ז

זאָווערוועט	𐤆	[zavərukhe]	'blizzard'
בזוכן	𐤆	[bazúkhn]	'visit'
גלז	𐤆	[gloz]	'glass'

1.2.12.1 záyin shin

Print: שז Script: 𐤆𐤔 Realization: [zh] (= ʒ)

SAMPLES OF שז

זשאָבע	𐤆𐤔	[zhábə]	'frog'
זאָזשנע	𐤆𐤔	[vázhnə]	'impressive; classy'
שאַנטאַזש	𐤆𐤔	[shantázh]	'blackmail'

1.2.13 khes

Print: ח Script: 𐤇 Realization: [kh] (= x)

ח occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [kh] is rendered by 5 (khof → §1.2.19).

SAMPLES OF ם			
חלום		[khóləm]	'dream'
בחור		[bókħər]	'fellow; bachelor'
כוח		[kóyəkħ]	'strength'

1.2.14 tes

Print: ט Script: Realization: [t]

SAMPLES OF ט			
טומל		[tuml]	'noise'
מענטל		[mánɬ]	'coat'
רויט		[royt]	'red'

1.2.14.1 tes shin

Print: טש Script: Realization: [tsh] (= č/tš)

טש functions as a single consonant.

SAMPLES OF טש			
טשיניק		[tsháynik]	'locket'
פֿאַרטייטשן		[fartáyɬshn]	'explain; translate'
בייטש		[bayɬsh]	'whip'

1.2.15 yud

Print: ץ Script:

ץ has two realizations.

1.2.15.1 Consonantal ץ

ץ is consonantal [y] (= j) at the beginning of a syllable.

SAMPLES OF CONSONANTAL ׳

י		[yo]	'yes'
יאָסלעס		[yáslæs]	'gums'
סטאַנציע		[stántsyə]	'station'

1.2.15.2 Vocalic ׳

׳ is vocalic [ɪ] at the middle or end of a syllable.

SAMPLES OF VOCALIC ׳

בין		[bɪn]	'dee'
וויכטיק		[vɪkhtɪk]	'important'
זי		[zi]	'she'

1.2.16 tsvey yudn

Print: װ Script: װ Realization: [ey] (= eɪ)

SAMPLES OF װ

אידעם		[éydəm]	'son in law'
שײן		[sheyn]	'pretty; beautiful'
קלײ		[kley]	'glue'

Note: Diphthong װ is preceded by א at the start of a word or syllable (→ §1.2.1.2). When two ׳s occur at the beginning of a word, syllable, or stem, they represent a sequence of consonantal ׳ (= [y] → §1.2.15.1) plus vocalic ׳ (= [ɪ] → §1.2.15.2), i.e. [yɪ], rather than diphthong [ey], hence:

ייד		[yɪd]	'jew'
יידיש		[yɪdish]	'Yiddish; Jewish'
ינגל		[yɪngl]	'boy'




1.2.17 pásəkh tsvey yuda

Print: װ (/ʷ) Script: װ Realization: [ay] (= aɪ)

In many texts, װ is written װ, i.e. identically with װ = [ey] (→ §1.2.16).

Where װ is not used, the difference must be ascertained via knowledge of the word or checked with a dictionary.

SAMPLES OF װ

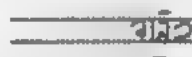
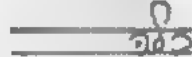

אײזן		[áyzn]	'iron'
בײטן		[báytn]	'change'
געטראײ		[gətráy]	'faithful'

1.2.18 kof

Print: כ (/k) Script: כ Realization: [k]

כ occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [k] is rendered by ק (kuf → §1.28).



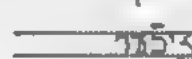
SAMPLES OF כ

כבוד		[kóvəd]	'honour'
כלה		[kála]	'bride'
בכוח		[bəkóyəkʰ]	'capable'

1.2.19 khoi

Print: ן (/kh) Script: ן Realization: [kh]

SAMPLES OF ן

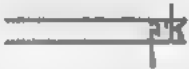


גאליאסטרא		[khalyástrə]	'gang'
פאפן		[khápm]	'catch'
זיכער		[zíkhər]	'certain; definite(ly)'

1.2.19.1 lānger khof

Replaces 5 in word-final position.

Print: ך Script:  Realization: [kh]




SAMPLES OF ך

איך		[ikh]	'I'
דאך		[dakh]	'roof'
וואך		[vokh]	'week'

1.2.20 lāmed

Print: ל Script:  Realization: [l]


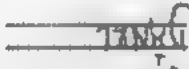

SAMPLES OF ל

לאמפ		[lamp]	'lamp'
וואילנע		[vaylinkə]	'little while'
טאל		[tal]	'valley'

1.2.21 mem

Print: מ Script:  Realization: [m]

SAMPLES OF מ

מענטש		[mentsh]	'person'
טאמער		[tomər]	'if; in case'
צימער		[tsimər]	'room'

1.2.21.1 shlósn mem

Replaces מ in word-final position.

Print: ם Script:  Realization: [m]

SAMPLES OF ם

בוידעם		[bóyɔɔm]	'attic'
נאַרענים		[narónim]	'fools'
שלום		[shóɫəm]	'peace'

1.2.22 nun

Print: ן Script:
Realization: [n]

SAMPLES OF ן

נודניק		[núɔɔnik]	'boring person; pest'
וואַנע		[váɔɔ]	'bath'
שאַנדע		[sháɔɔɔ]	'disgrace'

1.2.22.1 lánger nun

Replaces ן in word-final position.

Print: ן Script:
Realization: [n]

SAMPLES OF ן

מאַן		[mɔɔɔ]	'man; husband'
צאַן		[tsɔɔɔ]	'tooth'
שפּין		[shpɪɔɔ]	'spider'

1.2.23 sáməkh

Print: ס Script:
Realization: [s]

SAMPLES OF ס

סאַמאָוואַר		[sɔɔmɔvár]	'samovar'
ביסן		[báyɔɔɔ]	'bite'
שפּאַס		[shpɔɔs]	'fun'

1.2.24 **áyin**




Print: ו Script: װ

ו has two realizations.

1.2.24.1 **Stressed ו**

ו is realized as [e] (= e) in stressed position.



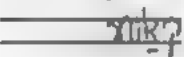
SAMPLES OF STRESSED ו

עסן		[ésn]	'eat'
נעכטן		[nékhtn]	'yesterday'
זע		[zɛ]	'(I) see'

1.2.24.2 **Unstressed ו**

ו is realized as [ə] (= ı, ɪ, ə, etc.) in unstressed position. It is sometimes called 'Reduced ו'.


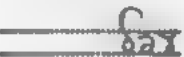
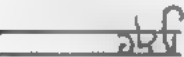
SAMPLES OF UNSTRESSED ו

געזאגט		[gəzókɪ]	'said'
באנען		[bənən]	'trains'
קאפע		[kávə]	'coffee'

1.2.25 **poy**

Print: ן (/n) Script: ן Realization: [p]

SAMPLES OF ן

פשוט		[póshet]	'simple'
עפל		[épl]	'apple'
פּאָט		[tóp]	'pot'

1.2.26 **fey**

Print: פ (/f/) Script: פֿ Realization: [f]

SAMPLES OF פֿ




פֿאַנטאַסטיש		[fantástish]	'fantastic'
אָפֿער		[ó[shər]	'maybe'
האָפֿן		[hó[n]	'hope'

1.2.26.1 **länger fey**

Print: ף Script: פֿֿ Realization: [f]

Replaces פֿ in word final position.




SAMPLES OF ף

בלאָף		[blóf]	'bluff'
וואָלף		[vólf]	'wolf'
עלף		[elf]	'eleven'

1.2.27 **tsádik**

Print: צ Script: צֿ Realization: [ts] (= c)

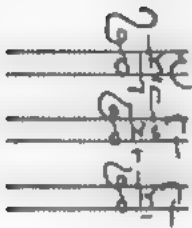
SAMPLES OF צֿ

צאָצקע		[tsátskə]	'toy'
צירק		[tsirk]	'circus'
קיצלען		[kítslən]	'tickle'

1.2.27.1 **länger tsadik**

Replaces צֿ in word final position.

Print: ץ Script: צֿֿ Realization: [ts] (= c)

גאַנץ		SAMPLES OF ך	
קלאָץ		[gants]	'complete'
קאַץ		[klots]	'beam; clumsy person'
		[kats]	'cat'

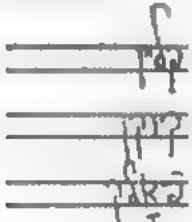
1.2.28

kuf

Print: ק

Script: 

Realization: [k]

קליין		SAMPLES OF ך	
קוקן		[kleyn]	'little'
פֿאָלק		[kukn]	'look'
		[folk]	'nation'

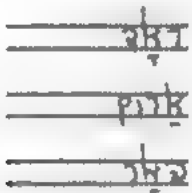
1.2.29

reysh

Print: ר

Script: 

Realization: [r] (= r, ʁ)

רעד		SAMPLES OF ר	
אַרומ		[red]	'wheel'
האַר		[arúm]	'around'
		[hór]	'hair'

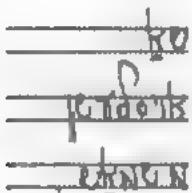
1.2.30

shin

Print: ש

Script: 

Realization: [sh] (= š)

שט		SAMPLES OF ש	
אויסלעשן		[sha]	'(Please) be quiet!'
מישמש		[óysleshn]	'extinguish'
		[míshmash]	'hotchpotch'

1.2.31 sin

Print: ש (/ש) Script: ש Realization: [s]

ש (= sin) occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [s] is rendered by ס (sámekh → §1.2.23). In some texts, the Hebrew diacritic dot to the upper left of the letter (ש) is employed to distinguish it from ש = [sh] (→ §1.2.30).

SAMPLES OF ש (= sin)

שכירות		[skhíras]	'wages'
שנאה		[ʃnə]	'hatred; enmity'
ארץ ישראל		[erəts(y)sró(ə)]	'Land of Israel'

1.2.32 tof

Print: ת (/ת) Script: ת Realization: [t]

ת occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [t] is rendered by ט (tes → §1.2.14).

SAMPLES OF ת




תאוה		[táyvə]	'passion; obsession'
תענוג		[táynəg]	'delight'
אסתר		[éstər]	'Esther'

1.2.33 sof

Print: ס (/ס) Script: ס Realization: [s]

ס occurs in the traditional system only. In the phonetic system, [s] is rendered by ס (sámekh → §1.2.23).

SAMPLES OF ח

חַתּוּנָה		[khásəna]	'wedding'
אַמֶּת		[éməs]	'true; truth'
שַׁבָּת		[shábəs]	'Saturday; Sabbath'

1.3 DELETION OF REDUNDANCIES

Note that two or even three traditional system consonants may be phonetically identical in Yiddish (although they were not, of course, in ancient Semitic). The phonetic system, adhering to its principle of one letter for one sound, selects one of the homophonous characters as follows:

Phonetic	Traditional system	Phonetic system
[k]	כ or ק	ק only
[kh]	ח or ח	ח only
[t]	ט or ת	ט only
[s]	ס, ש or ש	ס only
[v]	ב, ו, or ו	ו only

1.4 COEXISTENCE OF THE TWO SYSTEMS

The (majority) phonetic system and the (minority) traditional system coexist happily in Yiddish writing. The two can be joined in a single word. This occurs frequently where a Semitic component stem is incorporated into a Germanic component morphological pattern, e.g. חלומען [khóləməŋ] 'dream (v.)', where חלום [khóləm] 'dream (n.)' is verbalized via suffization of

infinitivizing suffix ן(ע)- [(ə)n]: likewise שכלדיק [séykhidik] 'logical', from שכל [séykh] 'logic; common sense' plus adjectivizing suffix דיק-.

1.5 MODERN STANDARD ORTHOGRAPHY

Modern standard orthography is relatively uniform. The minor variations that are still encountered do not pose a serious problem for the student.

1.5.1 Origins of modern standard orthography

Modern standard orthography was, in its broad outlines, formulated by the pioneer of modern Yiddish studies, Ber Borokhov, in 1913, and modified by the great Yiddish scholar Zalmen Reyzen in 1920. In that year, Reyzen's final version went into effect worldwide and has been followed since by culturally conscious Yiddish writers and publishers, voluntarily, and with none of the legal compulsion that usually accompanies orthographic reform. These and a number of other leading Yiddish scholars of the early twentieth century saw the need to modernize, rationalize and standardize. They believed that the phenomenal growth of Yiddish literature, press and theatre, and the overall expansion of Yiddish culture into many spheres of twentieth-century life would be hampered by inconsistencies and by the useless cumbersome machinery of silent letters that had been incorporated several decades earlier by the Germanizing press of the late nineteenth century. The introduction of modern standard orthography was not universal. Moreover, there is some acceptable variation within modern standard orthography.

1.5.2 Press orthography

The daily Yiddish press, in contrast to literary periodicals and books, did not on the whole accept the orthographic reforms. Many have retained the silent *ls* and *hs* that had been 'imported' from German in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g. זאָגען for זאָגן 'say', יאָר for יאָר 'year'). Some features of press orthography are not Germanisms, but rather features that were not accepted by modern standard orthography. Most notable of these is the continued use of װ rather than ן for [vi] still extensively encountered in newspaper usage, e.g. װײַז for װײַז 'Yiddish', אײנל for אײנל 'boy'.

1.5.3 Orthodox orthography

The most traditional religious Ashkenazic Jewish communities around the world, primarily (but not exclusively) Chassidic, make use of a system of spelling deriving largely from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It is remarkably similar to press orthography, differing from modern standard orthography most markedly in its retention of silent letters and other features that were, paradoxically, taken from modern literary German by proponents of the anti-traditionalist Enlightenment movement and later by the (even more anti-traditionalist) revolutionary parties. It is ironic that for today's traditional communities, the Germanizing orthography of the late nineteenth century, which emanated from a conscious effort to destroy all that they cherish, is now their symbol of identity in Yiddish spelling, setting them apart from almost all 'secular cultural Yiddishists' who discarded that system in 1920 in favour of modern standard orthography. The lesson for cultural historians lies in the symbolic values which facts assume in a society,

rather than the 'physical derivation' of those facts in history. In Chassidic circles, however, a number of genuine Old Yiddish traits do survive, most notably the use of װ rather than ן to mark initial and medial unstressed [ə], e.g. נײַזאָגט for געזאָגט 'said', the ן for [ə] being one of the features of Germanizing late-nineteenth-century spelling that was retained by modern standard orthography. In pre-World-War-II Poland, the eminent Yiddish scholar Solomon A. Birnbaum perfected a standardized version of Orthodox orthography.

1.5.4 Soviet orthography

Soviet Yiddish scholars embarked on a radical program of orthographic reform shortly after the Russian Revolution in 1917. Most of its features were in widespread use by the mid-1920s.

1.5.4.1 The phonetic system in Soviet orthography

The phonetic system within Soviet spelling eliminates the ן that separates consonantal ן from vocalic ן (→ §1.2.1.1) and the ן marking syllable onset, (→ §1.2.1.2) while retaining it to mark word onset. The confusion resulting from the ambiguous sequences ןװ (= [vu] or [uv]) and ןײ (= [ey], [u] or [yi]) is mitigated by the introduction of two Hebrew diacritics to mark the vocalic use of ן and ן in ambiguous positions (װ for [u] and ןײ for [i]), hence ןװ for ןװ 'where', ןװצײרע for ןװצײרע 'associated', העברעיִש for העברעיִש 'Hebrew'.

1.5.4.2 The traditional system in Soviet orthography

Soviet spelling eliminates the traditional system altogether, and respells the

entire Semitic component in accordance with its modified phonetic system, e.g. **עפֿשער** for **אפֿשער** [éfs̥hər] 'perhaps'. The aim of this radical reform was to de-Hebraicize and de-Judaize Yiddish, goals it thought it could help achieve by doing away with the special historical spelling conventions of the traditional system and, indeed, by doing away with the Semitic component itself in Soviet Yiddish. In addition to explicit anti-Hebrew and anti-tradition sentiments expressed by the Soviet reformers of the 1920s, the argument in favour of a unified and phonetically based system for the whole of Yiddish was also frequently put forward, both inside and outside pro-Soviet circles, on logical and practical grounds. Most pre-World War II versions of Soviet spelling also did away with the five word-final forms of letters (e.g. **עקלען** for **שלום** [shóləm] 'peace') although these were generally reintroduced in the early 1960s.

1.5.5 Yivo orthography

A widely taught (but less widely used) variant of modern standard orthography is that of the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research. The Yivo system arose in the 1930s as a compromise between the modern standard orthography of 1920 and the Soviet system (→ §1.5.4). Following Soviet spelling, the Yivo system eliminated the **Ɑ** separating consonantal **ן** from vocalic **ן** (→ §1.2.1.1) and the **Ɑ** marking syllable onset (→ §1.2.1.2); unlike Soviet spelling, Yivo orthography did retain **Ɑ** to mark stem onset (→ §1.2.1.2). It followed the Soviet system in mitigating the resulting confusion by introducing **ױ** for [u] and **ײ** for [i] in a number of positions. Both systems mark the sequence [yi] by **ײ**, hence **ײדיש** for **ײדיש**.

1.5.6 Innovations

The *Grammar* adheres to modern standard orthography. The only innovation is a graphic one. Following the practice that has developed at Oxford in recent years, the *Grammar* reintroduces the historical horizontal bar (known as the *ḥataf* [xóʔə], or more informally as the *ḥataf* 'little roof') over the spirants *ḥ* (= [kh]) and *ṣ* (= [s]), bringing them into line with *v* (= [v]) and *ṣ* (= [ʃ]). Thus all four plosive vs. spirant oppositions (ב [b] vs. *v* [v]; כ [k] vs. *ḥ* [kh]; פ [p] vs. *ṣ* [ʃ]; and ת [t] vs. *ṣ* [s]) are consistently marked, as was the case in Yiddish from the fourteenth century onwards. From the nineteenth century to the present, a multitude of combinations, none of them internally consistent, has arisen, sometimes using the Hebrew diacritic dot in the middle of the letter to mark the plosive for one, two, three or all of the four plosives, sometimes the horizontal bar to mark the spirant for one or more of the four spirants.

2 PHONETICS

2.0 OVERVIEW

The phonetic structure of Yiddish differs appreciably from that of English, and acquaintance with its major features at the outset is advisable. Despite the differences, the sound pattern of the language can generally be mastered with far greater ease, than, say, that of French, where the base of articulation and the accentuation pattern are vastly more distant from English. Square brackets [] enclose the phonetic transcriptions used in this book (→ §1.2). Where these transcriptions, intended for the English-speaking student, differ substantially from accepted phonetic transcription, the appropriate international phonetic symbol follows in parenthesis (). The sound system of Standard Yiddish is used in the *Grammar*. The major phonetic differences between the dialects lie in the realization of the stressed vowels.

2.1 VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS

2.1.1 Stressed vowels and diphthongs

The standard language does not distinguish long from short vowels. Stressed vowels are of roughly equal length. They are closer to the peripheral locations of the cardinal vowels in the vocal tract than their counterparts in English.

2.1.1.1 ʌ [a]

ʌ [a] is more peripheral (closer to the far front of the vowel space in the mouth, hence also more tense) than London *ʊ* in 'cut' or New York *o* in 'pot'. Cf. 'Continental a' in French, Dutch and German.

2.1.1.2 ʊ [e] (= ε)

ʊ [e] is more peripheral than English *e* in 'pen'.

2.1.1.3 ɪ [i]

ɪ [i] is higher and more tense than English *i* in 'tin' but it is not lengthened or diphthongized as English *ee* in 'three'.

2.1.1.4 ʊ [o] (= ɔ)

ʊ [o] is higher and more rounded than London *o* in 'lot'; more peripheral, rounded and tense than New York *ʊ* in 'truck'. Cf. 'Continental o'.

2.1.1.5 ɪ [u]

ɪ [u] is more tense and peripheral than English *ʊ* in 'put' but not diphthongized as English *oo* in 'spoon'.

2.1.1.6 ʌ [ay] (= aj)

ʌ [ay] starts at ʌ [a] (→ §2.1.1.1) and ends at offglide [ɪ] (= j). The nucleus of the diphthong is shorter, more front, and more tense than English *i* in 'write'.

2.1.1.7 ʌ [ey] (= ej)

ʌ [ey] starts higher than ʊ [e] (= ε) (→ §2.1.1.2) and ends at offglide [ɪ]

(= j). Cf. English *a/* in 'rain'.

2.1.1.8 י [oy] (-ɔj)

י [oy] starts at פּ [o] (= ɔ) (→ §2.1.1.4) and ends at offglide י (= j). The nucleus of the diphthong is shorter and more tense than English *oi* in 'foist'.

2.1.2 Reduced vowels

Reduced vowels occur in unstressed reduced syllables where the vowel repertoire is generally reduced. Most frequently, [ə] and [a] occur before the stress of a word, [ə] and [i] after it.

2.1.2.1 Pronunciation

The most frequent graphic representation of reduced vowels in the phonetic system is ו (→ §1.2.24.2). In the traditional system, they most often correspond with ה or א . Reduced vowels are generally transcribed [ə] in this book, but actual phonetic realization can vary according to a number of factors. Before the stressed syllable of a word, it usually approximates lax [ɪ] (= i), resembling English *i* in 'exotic', e.g. גִּזְוֹקֵט [gizókt] (= gizókt) 'said'. After the stress it tends toward [i] before certain consonants, especially ב , e.g. בּוֹיִדֵם [bóydīm] (= bójdīm) 'attic'. It also tends toward [i] word-finally, e.g. קָאָוִי [kávi] (= kávi) 'coffee', חָלֵי [kháli] (= xáli) 'Sabbath bread'. In the final reduced ו of the second diminutive (→ §4.33), it tends toward [ə], hence טִישְׁעֵלֶּע [tishelə/tishalə] (= tíšələ/tíšalə) 'very little table'.

2.1.2.2 Shift to [a] before [kh]

Reduced ו may be pronounced [a] before [kh] (פּ , ך or ח), e.g. כּוֹחַ [kóyakh] or [kóyakh] 'strength'.

2.1.2.3 Shift to [a] in the second diminutive

The first reduced ו in the suffix of the second diminutive, עלע- (→ §4.3.2) may be pronounced a, e.g. ביִמְעֵלַע [béymajə] or [béymajə] 'very little tree'. In the plural of the second diminutive, עלען-, the second reduced ו may be rendered [a] by assimilation to the following [kh] (→ §2.1.2.2). Vowel harmony is then applied to the first reduced ו, and both may be pronounced [a], hence [béymajakh].

2.1.3 Vowels not corresponding with the phonetic system

There is a handful of words, all of them very frequently used items in everyday speech, in which vowel letters do not correspond with their expected phonetic correlates within the phonetic system. Note however that some speakers have come to use 'spelling pronunciations' based on the conventional orthography ([oyf] etc.). Most other instances of incongruence result from assimilations and rhythmic factors. Wherever the usual pronunciation of a word is not self-evident from the spelling, a transcription in square brackets is supplied in the *Grammar*.

אויף 'on; upon; to' (→ §15.16.5)	[af]
אויפֿן 'on the; upon the; to the' (→ §5.3.3.1)	[aɪn]
אויפֿ 'up (verbal prefix)' (→ §8.2.2)	[uf]
אים 'him' (→ §§6.1.2.2, 6.1.3.2)	[em]
ביי 'at; by' (→ §15.1)	[ba]
ביים 'at the; by the' (→ §§5.3.3.1, 15.1)	[bam]
קײַם 'barely' (→ §10.1)	[kam]
קײַן 'to' (→ §15.16.3)	[kin]

2.2 CONSONANTS

2.2.1 Voicing

The consonants [b], [d], [g], [v], [z], and [zh] (= ž) are fully voiced in all positions, including word-finally (except when processed by assimilation → §2.2.2. – §2.2.4), e.g.

שריב 'I write'	[shrayb]
רעד 'I speak'	[réd]
וועג 'weight'	[vog]
אייז 'ice'	[ayz]
שאַנטאַזש 'blackmail'	[shantázh]

2.2.2 Devoicing assimilation

Voiced consonants [b], [d], [g], [v], [z], and [zh] (= ž) usually undergo devoicing as follows – [b] → [p]; [d] → [t]; [g] → [k]; [v] → [f]; [z] → [s]; [zh] (= ž) → [sh] (= š) before any of the voiceless consonants [f], [k], [kh], [p], [s], [sh], [t] and [ts]. The devoicing by assimilation of [b] and [d] is the most consistent.

SAMPLES OF CONSONANTS PROCESSED BY DEVOICING ASSIMILATION

שריב [shrayb] 'I write'	→	שרייבסט [shráypst] 'you (familiar) write'
רעד [red] 'I speak'	→	רעדסט [ré st] 'you (familiar) speak'
וועג [vog] 'weight'	→	וועגשטעל [vókshol] 'scale'
בריו [bríy] 'letter'	→	בריווטרעגער [brí tregər] 'mailman'
אייז [ayz] 'ice'	→	אייזקאסטן [ayskastn] 'ice box'
שאַנטאַזש [shantázh]	→	שאַנטאַזש-שטיק [shantásh shtík]
'blackmail'		'blackmailing tactics'

Devoicing assimilation may occur across word boundaries. Cf. קלוג [klug] 'clever' vs. אַ קלוג קינד [a klug/kluk kind] 'a clever child'.

2.2.3 Voicing assimilation

Voiceless consonants [f], [k], [kh], [p], [s], [sh], [t] and [ts] may undergo voicing as follows – [f] → [v]; [k] → [g]; [kh] (= x) → [gh] (= γ); [p] → [b]; [s] → [z]; [sh] (= š) → [zh] (= ž); [t] → [d]; [ts] (= c) → [dz] before any of the voiced consonants [b], [g], [d], [v], [z] and [zh] (= ž). Voicing assimilation is less consistent than devoicing assimilation, but it is frequently heard in natural speech. The consonant transcribed [gh] (= γ) is the voiced counterpart of [kh] (= x), which has no independent status in the language. It also serves as one of the possible realizations of ר (→ §2.2.11.1).

SAMPLES OF CONSONANTS PROCESSED BY VOICING ASSIMILATION

אויפֿ- [uf] 'up (v. prefix)'	→	אויפֿוועקן [úyvekʰn] 'wake up'
באך [bak] 'cheek'	→	באךבײַן [bágbeyn] 'cheekbone'
בוך [bukh] 'book'	→	בוךגעשעפֿט [búghgesheft] 'bookstore'
קאָפּ [kop] 'head'	→	קאָפּפּהייט [kópveyt] 'headache'
זיס [zis] 'sweet'	→	זיסזאַרג [zízvarg] 'candy products'
רעש [rá(ə)sh] 'noise'	→	רעשדיק [rá(ə)zhdik] 'noisy'
הײַט [vayt] 'far'	→	הײַטזענדדיק [váydzeyndik] 'farsighted'
שװיצן [shvítʰn] 'sweat (v.)'	→	שװיצבאַד [shvítʰdzbod] 'steambath'

Voicing assimilation may occur across word boundaries. Cf. קוש [kush] 'kiss' vs. אַ קוש געבן [a kúzh gebm] 'give a kiss'.

2.2.4 Chain assimilation

In both devoicing and voicing assimilation, it is the last of a series of

consonants that affects its predecessor either to devoice or to voice. Where three or more consonants occur sequentially, the last may mutate them all. Thus, ערשט [ersht] 'just' followed by געשען [gashén] 'happened' yields ערשט געשען [érzht gashén] via chain assimilation. There are a few cases when assimilation is progressive rather than regressive, and a consonant's voicing status affects the following consonant (→ §7.3).

2.2.5 Aspiration

Plosives ב (ב), ד (ד), g (ג), k (ק, כ), p (פ), t (ט, ת) are never aspirated. To perfect pronunciation, utter each of these in word final position, holding a mirror a short distance from the mouth, until oral discharge is eliminated.

לויב 'praise'	[loyb]
קלייד 'dress (n.)'	[kleyd]
קלוג 'clever'	[khug]
האק 'hatchet'	[hak]
זופ 'sip'	[zup]
נאכט 'night'	[nakht]

2.2.6 Pronunciation of 5 [kh] (-x)

English speakers unfamiliar with [kh] (ח and 5) may begin from its corresponding velar plosive [k] and proceed to spirantize. Cf. *ch* in the German 'ach Laut', Scottish *ch* in 'loch'.

2.2.7 Pronunciation of ל

Many older speakers born in Eastern Europe still distinguish a 'hard' from a

'soft' (= palatalized) ל. The distinction, common in the Slavonic environment, is rapidly losing ground in modern spoken Yiddish. 'Soft l' is heard most often before י, e.g. קל"מקט [klyámka] 'doorknob'.

2.2.8 Syllabic ל [l] (- ן)

ל functions as a 'vowel' when it follows a consonant in an unstressed syllable. It is not preceded by a shewa vowel in speech or ם in writing, but carries syllabicity on its own, e.g. גל"מ [gópl] (= gópl) 'fork', לע"מ [lérl] (= lérl) 'spoon'.

2.2.9 Syllabic נ [n] (- ן)

נ (or ן) [n] too, can function as a 'vowel' when it follows a consonant in a reduced syllable. It is not preceded by a shewa vowel in speech or ם in writing, but carries syllabicity all on its own.

SAMPLES OF SYLLABIC נ

וואגן 'wagon'	[vógn]
טאנצנדיק 'while dancing'	[tántsdik]
מאכ"נ 'make'	[mákhɲ]
מענטשן 'people'	[méntshɲ]

But, unlike ל which is always syllabic when it follows a consonant in a reduced syllable, נ is not syllabic when the preceding consonant is מ [m], נ [n], any stressed vowel or diphthong, or one of the following three sequences: גג [ng] (= ng), נק [nk] (= nk), or consonant plus ל [l]. In these cases, a shewa vowel is heard and ם appears.

קיימען 'chimney'	[kóymən]
באנען 'trains (n.)'	[banən]

עסײַען 'essays'	[eséyan]
פֿאַנגען 'capture (v.)'	[fángən]
זינקען 'sink (v.)'	[zínkən]
גאָלען 'orks'	[góplən]

Note however that adjectives ending in [ng] and [nk] do exceptionally retain syllabic [n] both in speech and writing, when inflection to an objective case (→ §§5.5.2 – 5.5.4) results in one of the sequences [ng] + [n] or [nk] + [n], e.g. לאַנג [lángn] 'long', פֿלינק [flínkn] 'agile'.

2.2.10 Bilabial assimilation

Syllabic ן (or ך) is pronounced [m] rather than [n] via assimilation following bilabials ב [b] and פ [p], e.g. אויסקלייבן 'choose' [óysklaybm], האָבן 'have' [hóbm], ליפּן 'lips' [líp̩m].

2.2.11 Pronunciation of ר [r]

There are three acceptable realizations of ר.

2.2.11.1 Fricative [r]

Fricative [r] (–ɣ) is produced at the velum. It is the spirantized counterpart of [g] and the voiced counterpart of [kh]. Most English speakers master this realization most successfully. The target sound may be approached from [g], [k] or [kh] (→ §2.2.6).

2.2.11.2 Lingual [r]

Lingual [r] is produced at the upper gums by tongue vibration.

2.2.11.3 Uvular [r]

Uvular [r] is produced by vibrating the uvula.

2.2.12 Pronunciation of צ [ts] (= c)

Affricate צ [ts] resembles the English sequence *t* + *s* in 'cuts' but it functions as a single sound unit and is consequently pronounced in a shorter timespace than its English counterpart.

2.3 RHYTHM

2.3.1 Syllables

There are four syllable types.

2.3.1.1 High syllables

High syllables have primary stress (marked by ' over the vowel nucleus of the syllable), e.g. [mé] in [pamélaħ] מַאֲחַעלֶעךְ 'slowly'. High syllables are loud, long and intoned and can have as their nucleus any of the repertoire of stressed vowels and diphthongs.

2.3.1.2 Low syllables

Low syllables are never stressed, and have a very limited number of vowel nuclei (usually [ə] or [a] before the word stress and [ə] or [ɪ] or syllabic [l] or [n] after it) e.g. [pa] and [laħ] in מַאֲחַעלֶעךְ. Low syllables are far less loud than high ones, and they are short and unintoned.

2.3.1.3 Middle syllables

Middle syllables have secondary stress (marked by ` over its vowel nucleus), e.g. [kayt] in [pamélekhkàyt] פאמעלעכקײט 'slowness'. In a more detailed treatment, nonprimary stress would be further analyzed into secondary, tertiary etc.

2.3.1.4 Lowered syllables

Like the high syllables from which they derive (→ §2.3.1.1), lowered syllables may have any nucleus vowel. They may have secondary stress (like middle syllables → §2.3.1.3) or none at all (like low syllables → §2.3.1.2). A lowered syllable is a syllable that declines from high to middle or low, or from middle to low in normal continuous speech, in deference to the master rhythmic pattern (→ §2.3.4), e.g. [me] in איך בין געפֿאָרן אַהײַמגעגאַנגען [i]khbin nèkhtn pamèlakh ahéymgəgəngən 'I walked home slowly yesterday', although [me] would of course remain high if the speaker wished to emphasize the slowness of the journey.

2.3.2 Word stress

Word stress (usually high in isolation) is bound to the root syllable, which is most frequently the first. No matter how many syllables are added in inflections or derivations, the same syllable, while it may be reduced to secondary stress in consequence of contextual reduction, retains its full vowel and, relationally speaking, retains its stress vis à vis any low syllables, e.g. לעב [lév] 'live', לעבן [lébm] 'life', לעבעדיק [lébedik] 'alive', לעבעדיקערהײט [ləbedikərhéyt] 'while living'. While lowered from high to middle in this last word, [lə] always remains stressed vis à vis [bə].

2.3.2.1 Semitic component word stress

In the Semitic component, stress is generally assigned to the penultimate syllable. The consequence is that upon suffixization, stress jumps to the new penultimate syllable, e.g. חֵבֶר [kháver] 'friend' vs. חֲבֵרִים [khavéyrim] 'friends'. The low [ər] of [kháver] emerges as the high [éy] of [khavéyrim].

2.3.3 Word rhythm

The most common word rhythm is a trochee pattern of ' (high) followed by _ (low), e.g. בֶּעֶקֶר [béx_{ak}] 'baker', אִפְשָׁר [éí_{shax}] 'perhaps', נֹדֵנִיק [nú_{nik}] 'boring person; pest; poor conversationalist'. If there is an unstressed syllable before the stress, the amphibrach _ ' _ results, e.g. נִגְנָנְנָה [gə_{gáng_{an}}] 'went', עִקְשָׁנוּת [ak_{shó_{nas}}] 'stubbornness', כַּחֲלִיטְסֶרֶ [khal_{yás_{tr}}] 'gang'. Both types share penultimate stress which is the most common type in the language. Many thousands of Yiddish words were incorporated into the language in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, largely from the lexicon of internationalisms that have permeated Western languages generally. These frequently preserve full vowels in unstressed syllables (e.g. אָרגאַניזאַציע [organizátsyə] 'organization'), iambic stress pattern (e.g. אָטאָם [atóm] 'atom'), or both (e.g. קאַפּאַציטעט [kapatsité] 'capacity; big-shot'). They have, in effect, evolved a new pattern that coexists with the old. In rapid speech, however, some reduction of unstressed syllables to [ə] does occur (e.g. [erəplán] for [eroplán] ערֶאָפּלֶאן 'airplane').

2.3.4 The master rhythmic pattern

The master rhythmic pattern entails highs at roughly equal intervals, interlaced with a far greater number of middles, lows and lowereds. The result is a starkly contrasting 'mountain range' pattern, with roughly equidistant peaks. Each rhythmic unit (e.g. phrase, sentence) has one and only one high. Reduction (the lowering of highs to middle or low and of middles to low) is roughly in direct proportion to the rhythmic requirement that stresses be kept equally apart.

2.3.5 Sentence rhythm

Phrases and sentences in everyday speech tend to follow the same metrical structures as words, e.g. אִין וויס איך 'I don't know', comprising [ikh] [veys] and [nit] is realized as amphibrach [$\text{ikh} \text{véys}_{\text{nit}}$] in moderate speech, and trochee [$\text{khvéys}_{\text{nit}}$], with only two syllables, in more rapid speech. The

Yiddish rhythm pattern extends word rhythm over phrases and sentences, so that each sentence, like the word, has a single stressed syllable, which may or may not be surrounded by many reduced syllables (some of which retain some secondary stress). The actual stress pattern can vary depending on message and emphasis. The major constraint is that the high stress be selected from a syllable that can bear word stress when that word is uttered in isolation. Those syllables stressed in isolation will of course lose stress when they are not selected for sentence stress. They are relegated to reduced syllable status in lowness and shortness, but the repertoire of vowels need not be reduced as in a word uttered in isolation. The underlying principle is the presence of a single climactic stress somewhere along the line. Hence

איך הייט ניט וואָס ער פּלאַפּלט sequentially [ikh veys nit vos er plaplt] can be realized [(i)khvéysnitvoserplàpIt] 'I don't know what he's babbling about' or [(i)khvèysnitvoserplàpIt] 'I don't know what he's *babbling* about'. A series of reduced syllables tends to be packed into the same timespan accorded a single stressed syllable.

2.4 DIALECT VARIATION

There are many differences between the spoken varieties of Yiddish in morphology, lexicon and grammar (e.g. → §§4.1.4, 6.1.4, 7.3.5). The best-known and most salient features distinguishing the three major modern Yiddish dialects are the systems of stressed vowels. The standard language, used throughout the *Grammar*, enjoys nearly perfect one-to-one correspondence between symbol and sound, at least in the phonetic system governing the largest part of the language (→ §2.1.3 for exceptions). It is very close to the stressed vowel system of Northeastern ('Lithuanian') Yiddish. The only major difference is that part of the series of words in the standard language with [oy] has [ej] in Lithuanian; hence וואָוין [voyn] 'live; dwell' and וײַן [veyn] 'cry' are both [veyn] in Northeastern Yiddish. The other two dialects, Mideastern ('Polish') and Southeastern ('Ukranian') Yiddish have rather more vowels and therefore exhibit a one-to-two or one-to-three relationship between symbol and sound. The student learning the language as a beginner is best advised to master Standard Yiddish in the first instance, and to investigate dialectal variation at a later stage. The student who has a native dialect, on the other hand, is best advised to adhere to his or her native variety. All the native dialects are nonstandard insofar as none is identical with the standard. None of the dialects are substandard and

use and preservation of genuine dialect is encouraged. The following are the major stressed vowel correspondences of the three dialects. Long vowels are marked by a macron above the vowel letter (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū). Note that the [u] and [ū] realizations for ו in Mideastern and Southeastern dialects occur only in nineteenth- and twentieth-century borrowings. The words themselves entered these dialects long after the sound change [u] → [i] had been completed, and they were therefore unaffected. Assorted consonantal differences may be noted from the examples cited.

Standard	Northeastern	Mideastern	Southeastern
2.4.1 א=[a]	[a]	[a]	[o] or [a]
האַנט 'hand'	[hant]	[hant]	[ont]
שװאַך 'weak'	[shvakh]	[shvakh]	[shvakh]
2.4.2 ע=[e]	[e]	[e] or [ey]	[e] or [ey / i]
בעט 'bed'	[bet]	[bet]	[bet]
בעטן 'ask'	[betn]	[beytn]	[beytn / bitn]
2.4.3 י=[i]	י	[i] or [I]	[i] or [I]
לייפ 'lip'	[lip]	[lip]	[lip]
לייב 'love'	[lib]	[lip]	[lɪb]
2.4.4 ג=[o]	[o]	[o], [u] or [ū]	[o] or [u]
גאָט 'God'	[got]	[got]	[got]

זאָגן 'say'	[zogn]	[zugn]	[zugn]
פֿאַרן 'ride; go'	[forn]	[furn]	[furn]

2.4.5 וּ=[u]	[u]	[u], [ʊ], [i] or [ɪ]	[u] or [i] or [ɪ]
קולטור 'culture'	[kultúr]	[kultúr]	[kultúr]
זון 'sun'	[zun]	[zin]	[zin]
זון 'son'	[zun]	[zɪn]	[zɪn]

2.4.6 עֵ=[ay]	[ay]	[ä]	[a] or [ay]
זײַן 'be'	[zayn]	[zän]	[zan]
כּדאַי 'worthwhile'	[kədáy]	[kədä]	[kədáy]

2.4.7 שׁ=[ey]	[ey]	[ay]	[ey]
שׂיין 'beautiful'	[sheyn]	[shayn]	[sheyn]

2.4.8 וי=[oy]	[ey] or [oy]	[oy] or [ɔu]	[oy] or [ou / u]
טויב 'deaf'	[toyb]	[toyp]	[toyb]
טויב 'pigeon'	[toyb]	[tɔup]	[toub / tub]

3 GREETINGS

3.0 OVERVIEW

The sampling offered provides time-related and more general greetings. A number of greetings have familiar and formal variants (→ §§6.1.6.1, 7.5.1).

3.1 TIME-RELATED GREETINGS

3.1.1 Morning

גוט מאָרגן! (אַ) [(a)gut mórgn] 'Good morning'.

Response:

אַ גוט יאָר! [agut yór] 'Good morning to you' (lit. 'A good year').

3.1.2 Evening (upon meeting)

גוטן אָכט! (אַ) [(a)gut nóvnt] 'Good evening'.

Response:

גוטן אָכט! (אַ) 'Good evening to you'.

3.1.3 Evening / night (upon parting / going to bed)

אַ גוטע נאַכט! [a gúte nákht] 'Good night'.

Responses:

אָ גוטע נאַכט! 'Good night to you'.

שלאַך נעזונט! 'Sleep well (familiar)'.

שלאַכט נעזונט! 'Sleep well (formal)'.

זיסע חלומות! [zíse khalóyməs] 'Sweet dreams'.

3.1.4 On Friday (upon parting) or Saturday before sundown (upon meeting or parting)

אָ גוט שבת! [a gut shábəs] 'Have a Good Sabbath'. When used upon parting on Friday, אָ גוט שבת! may have the sense of 'Have a good weekend'. A 'secular' alternative, specific to the whole of the weekend, is אָ גוטן טוין-וואָך! [a gutn sòvvókh] 'Have a good weekend'.

Response:

אָ גוט שבת! [a gut shábəs] 'Good Sabbath / weekend to you'.

3.1.5 On Saturday evening (after sundown)

אָ גוטע וואָך! / גוט-וואָך! [gudvókh / a gúta vókh] 'Have a good week'.

Response:

אָ גוטע וואָך! / גוט-וואָך! 'A good week to you'.

3.1.6 On the eve of a traditional holiday or on the holiday

אָ גוט יום טוב! [(a)gut yóntaf] 'Good holiday'.

Responses:

אָ גוט יום טוב! [(a)gut yóntaf] 'Good holiday to you'.

אָ גוט יום טוב דיר! [(a)gut yóntaf díř] 'Good holiday to you (familiar)'.

אָ גוט יום טוב אײַך! [(a)gut yóntaf áykh] 'Good holiday to you (formal)'.

3.2 GENERAL GREETINGS

3.2.1 Upon meeting

חאָס מאַכסטו? [vos mákhstə?] 'How are you? (familiar)'.

חאָס מאַכטיר? [vos mákhtir?] 'How are you? (formal)'.

חאָס הערט זיך? [vos (h)értsakh? / vos (h)érdzakh?] 'What's new?'.

חאָס הערט זיך עפעס? [vos (h)értsakh épəs? / vos (h)érdzakh épəs?] 'So what's new?'.

חאָס הערט זיך עפעס גוטס? [vos (h)értsakh épəs gúts? / vos (h)érdzakh épəs gúts?] 'What's the good news?'.

חאָס מאַכט אַ ייד? [vos makht a yíd?] 'How are you doing?' (lit. 'How is a Jew?').

Possible Responses:

ברוך השם [borkhashém] 'Fine' (lit. 'Blessed is God').

גאָט צו דאַנקען [gòt tsə dánkən] 'Fine' (lit. 'Thank God').

אַ דאַנק [adánk] '(Fine) thank you'.

גאַנץ גוט [gándz gút] 'Pretty good'.

נישקשה [nishkóshə] 'Not too bad'.

אַזוי [ázóy] 'So so' (with lengthening of both vowels; often accompanied by horizontal wagging of fingers of one or both hands and inclining of head).

ס'קען אַלעמאל זײַן בעסער [sken àləmol zayn bésər] 'Could always be better'.

ס'קען אַלעמאל זײַן ערנער [sken àləmol zayn érgər] 'Could always be worse'.

חאָס זאָל איך מאַכן? [vozi ikh mákhən?] 'What do you expect?' (lit. 'How should I be?').

וואָס מאַכסטו? [vos makhstú?] 'How are *you*? (familiar)'.

וואָס מאַכט איר? [vos makht ír?] 'How are *you*? (formal)'.

3.2.2 Upon shaking hands

שלוֹם עליכֶם [sholəmaléykhəm] 'How do you do?' (lit. 'Peace unto you').

Response:

עליכֶם שלום [aleykhəmsbóləm] 'How do you do?' (lit. 'Unto you peace').

The handshake is usually clenched simultaneous with the stressed syllable of שלום עליכֶם or עליכֶם שלום.

3.2.3 Upon greeting a stranger

פֿון וואָנעט קומסטו? [funvánət kúmtə?] 'Where do you come from? (familiar)'.

פֿון וואָנעט קומט איר? [funvánət kúmtír?] 'Where do you come from? (formal)'.

פֿון וואָנעט ביסטו אַ לאַנדסמאַן? [funvánət bista lántsman?] 'Where do you come from?' (especially current in America and other immigration centres).

פֿון וואָנעט זינט איר אַ לאַנדסמאַן? [funvánət zaytír a lántsman?] 'Where do you come from? (formal)' (especially current in America and other immigration centres).

פֿון וואָנעט קומט מען? [funvánət kúmtmən?] 'Where do you come from?' (lit. 'Where does one come from?').

פֿון וואָנעט קומט אַ ייד? [funvánət kumt a yíd?] 'Where do you come from, my friend?' (lit. 'Where does a Jew come from?').

Response:

— פֿון ניו־יאָרק [fun nuyórk] 'from New York' (+ name of place), e.g.

York', פֿון פאַריז [fun paríz] 'from Paris'. If the place name is the name of a city or town, -ער (f. -ערין) may be suffixed to the name of the city to form an agentive noun, e.g. ניו־יאָרקערין 'I'm a New Yorker (f.)', אײך בין אַ פאַריזער 'I'm a Parisian (m.)' (→ 95.12.1).

3.2.4 Asking a stranger his or her name

ווי הייסטו? [vi héystə?] 'What's your name? (familiar)'.

ווי היסט איר? [vi héystir?] 'What's your name? (formal)' (lit. 'How are you called?').

Response:

— אײך הייסט — [khéys (i)] 'My name is ...'

3.2.5 Upon answering the telephone

האַלֶּע 'Hello'.

Response (when caller is known):

— האַלֶּע מיט נאָם פֿון האַלֶּע, e.g. האַלֶּע מיט חיים [halò | Kháyim] — האַלֶּע מיט מאַשע [halò | Máshə].

3.2.6 Welcoming in person

ברוך הבא [bor(ə)khabó] 'Welcome! (sg.)' (lit. 'Blessed is the comer').

ברוכים הבאים [brukhimabóim] 'Welcome! (pl.)' (lit. 'Blessed are the comers').

Responses:

ברוך הנמצא [bor(ə)khanímtə] 'Thank you for the welcome (sg.)' (lit. 'Blessed is the one to be found here, i.e. the resident').

ברוך־ים היושב־ים [brukhimayóyshvim] 'Thank you for the welcome (pl.)'
(lit. 'Blessed are the people who stay here, i.e. the residents').

יֵשֶׁר כוֹחַ [(yi)sh(ər)kóyakh] 'Good of you to ask, well said' (lit. 'congratulations' but also traditionally used for 'thank you').

3.2.7 Upon parting

זַי גַּעזוּנְט! [záy gazúnt] 'Be Well!; Goodbye' (familiar).

זַיִט גַּעזוּנְט! [záyt gazúnt] 'Be Well!; Goodbye' (formal).

כָּל טוֹבָה [kól tív] 'All the best'.

אַ גּוּטן! [a gútn] 'All the best' (lit. 'A good (...)').

4 NOUNS

4.0 OVERVIEW

Nouns occur in three genders – masculine, feminine and neutral. They usually inflect for pluralization and diminutivization. Diminutives may have the sense of physical smallness. They frequently add subjective emotional nuances, affectionate or pejorative, to the noun. They combine to form compound nouns.

4.1 GENDER

The gender of nouns is historically fixed and must be learned with each noun. It would not, for example, be possible to determine logically that 'table' is masculine (דער טיש), 'notebook' feminine (די העפֿט) and 'country' neutral (דאָס לאַנד). Nevertheless, there are rules and tendencies covering gender assignment for many nouns. The first principle assigns natural masculines to masculine and natural feminines to feminine. The dynamic tendency evident for nouns that exhibit no inherent sex is evident in gender assignment for new words and occasional realignments of old ones. It assigns masculinity to nouns ending in a consonant (e.g. דער אויטאָמאָביל [o(y)tomobil] 'automobile') and femininity to nouns ending in a vowel (e.g. די טעכנאָלאָגיע [tekhnołógye] 'technology'). There is some acceptable variation in gender within literary Yiddish. A noun's gender should be checked with a dictionary.

4.1.1 Masculinity

Masculinity may be determined semantically, morphologically or derivationally. The masculine definite article is דער (which inflects to דעם in both object cases → §95.3.2 – 5.3.3).

4.1.1.1 Semantic masculinity

Nouns referring to biological males, and agentives without a feminizing suffix, are masculine. Semantic masculinity overrides morphological and derivational factors.

SAMPLES OF SEMANTIC MASCULINITY

ox	דער אָקס
thief	דער גנב [gánəv]
son	דער זון
grandfather	דער זיידע
man	דער מאַן
king	דער מלך [méyləx]
	דער קעניג [kéynig]

4.1.1.2 Morphological masculinity

Nouns with the following suffixes are generally masculine. An example follows each suffix.

יזם-:	דער ייִדישיזם [yidishízm] 'Yiddishism'
syllabic ל:	דער אָרבל 'sleeve'
syllabic ן-:	דער בראַנפֿן [brómfn] 'whiskey'
עם-:	דער פֿאַדעם 'thread'
ער-:	דער זומער 'summer'

4.1.1.3 Masculine agentives

Semantic and morphological masculinity overlap in the case of the masculine

agentivizing suffixes -אָר, -יטט (stressed), -ניק, -ענט (stressed), -עץ, -ער, and pejorative -וק and -אָק (both stressed). An example follows each.

-אָר:	דיקטאַטאָר [diktátor] 'dictator'
-יטט:	ידישיסט [yidishíst] 'Yiddishist'
-ניק:	נודניק 'bore; pest; poor conversationalist'
-ענט:	פּרעזידענט [prezidént] 'president'
-עץ:	מאַלאָדיעץ [malodyéts] 'man who can get things done'
-ער:	לערער 'teacher'
-וק:	שנאיִדערוק [shnayderúk] 'tailor who is not a nice person'
-אָק:	פאַסקודניאָק [paskudnyák] 'malicious person'

4.1.1.4 Derivational masculinity

Nominalizations of verb stems are masculine, e.g. דער שטופ 'push (n.)' from שטופן [shtúpm] 'push (v.)'. Note that where past participles undergo vowel change (→ §5.6.2.2–7.6.2.5), the nominalization frequently derives from the stem of the past participle, e.g. דער שפּרונג 'jump (n.)' (cf. שפּרינגען 'jump (v.)', past participle געשפּרונגען).

4.1.2 Femininity

Femininity may be determined semantically, morphologically or derivationally. The feminine definite article is די (which inflects to דער in dative → §5.3.3).

4.1.2.1 Semantic femininity

Nouns referring to biological females, and agentives with a feminizing suffix, are feminine. Semantic femininity overrides morphological and derivational factors.

SAMPLES OF SEMANTIC FEMININITY

daughter	די טאָכטער
grandmother	די באָבע
woman	די פֿרוי
queen	די מלכה [málkə]
aunt	די מוחע
cow	די קו

4.1.2.2 Morphological femininity

Nouns that end in one of the following tend to be feminine. The inclusion of *-v*, *-n* and *-h* in the list dictates that all nouns ending in an unstressed vowel are feminine, except where in conflict with semantic masculinity, e.g. *דער טאטע* 'father'. Note that nouns ending in two of the listed endings, *-v* and *-h*, may alternatively be neutral (→ §4.1.3). An example follows each.

<i>-a</i> :	די דוגמא [dúgmə] 'example'
<i>-h</i> :	די כלה [kálə] 'bride'
<i>-v</i> :	די פֿרייהייט 'freedom'
<i>-n</i> :	די שטימונג 'mood'
<i>-v</i> :	די ליטעראטור [literatúr] 'literature'
<i>-h</i> :	די אקשנות [akshónə] 'stubbornness'
<i>-ik</i> :	די גראמאטיק [gramátik] 'grammar'
<i>-e</i> :	די קאָפּע 'coffee'
<i>-v</i> :	די צעמישעניש [tsəmíshənish] 'confused situation'
<i>-n</i> :	די קאָנפֿערענץ [konfərənts] 'conference'
<i>-e</i> :	די ביבליאָטעק [bibl(y)oték] 'library'
<i>-v</i> :	די בעקערע [bekeráy] 'bakery'
<i>-ik</i> :	די שיינקייט 'beauty'
<i>-v</i> :	די פֿרײַנדשאַפֿט [fráyntshaft] 'friendship'

4.1.2.3 Feminine agentives

Semantic and morphological femininity overlap in feminine agentive suffixes **-טע** (most frequent feminizer of Semitic component agentives), **-יצע** and **-קע**. Some agentives may be feminized with either **-ין** or **-קע**, e.g. **לערער** (דער) 'teacher (m.)' → **לערערין** (די) = **לערערקע** (די) 'teacher (f.)'. An example follows each feminine agentive suffix.

-טע :	די גנבֿטע [gánəftə] 'thief (f.)'
-יצע :	די קראַסאַחיצע [krasávitsə] 'beautiful girl / woman'
-ין :	די בעקערין 'baker (f.)'
-קע :	די פרעזידענטקע [prezidéntkə] 'president (f.)'

4.1.2.4 Derivational femininity

Nominalizations of adjective stems are feminine. Note that where comparative adjectives undergo vowel change (→ §5.10), the nominalization derives from the stem of the comparative, e.g. **רײַ לענג** 'length' (cf. **לאַנג** 'long', **לענגער** [léyngər] 'longer'), **רײַ קעלט** 'cold(ness)' (cf. **קאַלט** 'cold', **קעלטער** 'colder').

4.1.3 Neutrality

Neutrality may be determined semantically, morphologically or derivationally. The neutral definite article is **דאָס** (which inflects to **דעם** in dative → §5.3.3). Neutrality varies in a number of words with the other two genders, most frequently femininity. Where variation does exist in the literary language, the modern trend is away from neutral.

4.1.3.1 Semantic neutrality

Diminutives in **-ל** and **-עלע** (→ §§4.3.1 – 4.3.2) are neutral irrespective of the gender of the base form of the noun, hence **דאָס טישל** 'the little table'

and *רעך טיש* 'the table'; *רעך טישעלע* 'the very little table' from *טישעלע* 'the very little table'; analogously, *רעך געסלע* 'the very little street', from *רעך געסלע* 'the very little street'; from *רעך געסלע* 'the very little street'. There are two words in which semantic masculinity and femininity conflict rather sharply with the neutrality of diminutives – *ינגל* 'boy' and *מיינל* 'girl'. Both sets of variants – *רעך ינגל* and *רעך מיינל* and *רעך ינגל* and *רעך מיינל* are equally acceptable. Historically, *ינגל* is the diminutive of *יונג* and *מיינל* of *מיינ*. Native speakers do not, however, perceive *ינגל* and *מיינל* as diminutives in the modern language. The base nouns have become emotionally charged epithets that combine with adjectives in stock phrases, usually to mark indelicacy. They may explicitly be negatively charged, e.g. *דער יונג* 'fellow with no manners or concern for other people', *די אלטע מיינל* 'old maid'. They often serve to denote physical strength, and are accompanied by 'spaced out' pronunciation, e.g. *א געזונטער יונג* [ə | gə | zún | tər | yúng] '(He's) a healthy (= powerful) fellow', *אן איזערנע מיינל* [àn | áy | zər | n̩ | móy] '(She's) an iron lady'.

4.1.3.2 Morphological neutrality

Nouns that begin or end in one of following affixes are generally neutral. Note that nouns suffixed by *-ות* and *-עניש* (and occasionally, *-ערי*), enumerated as feminine (→ §4.1.2.2), may also be neutral. Virtually none of the neutral affixes serves to produce new nouns in the modern language, but all are encountered in stock items.

גע-	<i>דאָס געשלעג</i> [gəʃlég] 'fight'
רום-:	<i>דאָס רויחאָרנ</i> 'raw material'
טום-:	<i>דאָס יידנטום</i> 'Jewry'
ט-:	<i>דאָס שלעכטס</i> 'evil'
ע-:	<i>שריבעלעך</i> [shráybakhts / shráybakhts] 'bad writing'

4.1.3.3 Derivational neutrality

Nominalizations of infinitives are neutral, hence **רױפֿן** **רױפֿן** 'running (n.)' from **לױפֿן** 'run (v.)', **זינגען** **זינגען** 'singing (n.)' from **זינגען** 'sing (v.)'. Nominalizations of adjectives ending in **ע**- are neutral, hence **אױסערנעוויינטלעך** **אױסערנעוויינטלעך** 'the extraordinary', from **אױסערנעוויינטלעך** 'extraordinary'.

4.1.4 Two genders in dialectal usage

Northeastern Yiddish has only two genders – masculine and feminine. Nouns appearing as neutral in the other dialects and the standard language are assigned either masculinity or femininity. Inanimate objects tend toward feminine (e.g. **לױט** **לױט** **די** **לױט** for standard **לױט** **לױט** 'country'). Diminutives have the gender of their base nouns (e.g. **טישל** **טישל** **דער** **טישל** for standard **טישל** **טישל** 'table', cf. base form **טיש** **טיש** **דער** **טיש**).

4.2 PLURALS

Plurals, like gender, must be learned with each noun. There are few inviolable rules, but overall patterns can account for the vast majority of nouns in the language. Most capricious are the nouns undergoing vowel change with or without the **ע**- pluralizing ending. A dictionary should be consulted for a noun's plural.

4.2.1 Plural ending **(ע)**-

Nouns ending in a consonant or stressed vowel usually pluralize by

suffixation of ן- (or ן- after ה, נ, a stressed vowel or diphthong, נג, נק, or consonant + ל → §2.2.9).

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ן-(ע)-

אַרמִי [arméy] 'army' → אַרמִיִּיען

אַװטאָ (אװטאָ) 'train' → אַװטאָנען

בעט 'bed' → בעטן

גאַס 'street' → גאַסן

האָטעל 'hotel' → האָטעלן

מענטש 'person; good human being' → מענטשן

פּראָפּעסאָר [profésor] 'professor' → פּראָפּעסאָרן [profésorən]

שול 'traditional synagogue; school' → שולן

שותפות [shútíes] 'partnership' → שותפותן

שעה [sho] 'hour' → שעהן [shóən] (also spelled שעהען)

4.2.2 Plural ending ם-

The plural ending ם- is frequently pronounced somewhere between [s] and [z]. A number of categories of nouns take ם-.

4.2.2.1 Nouns ending in unstressed ן-

Nouns ending in unstressed ן- usually pluralize by suffixation of ם-. A number of nineteenth-century borrowings from German have plurals in ן-, especially in political terminology, e.g. מאַסע (די) 'mass' → מאַסען '(the) masses'. Some have alternate plurals in ם- and ן-(ע)-. The ן-(ע)- endings predominate in journalistic and parliamentary styles and usually denote a more abstract sense, e.g. פּראָגע 'question' pluralizes to פּראָגעס 'questions (in the everyday sense)' and פּראָגען 'questions (of major importance, e.g. to society)'. Cf. §15.8.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN UNSTRESSED ו- PLURALIZING WITH ט-

הענטשקע 'glove' → הענטשקעס

קאָפּע 'coffee' → קאָפּעס

קעשענע 'pocket' → קעשענעס

שאַקטע 'rag' → שאַקטעס

4.2.2.2 Internationalisms ending in an unstressed nonreduced vowel

Internationalisms ending in a vowel that is not stressed but that retains its full vowel colour usually pluralize by suffixation of ט-.

SAMPLES OF INTERNATIONALISMS ENDING IN AN UNSTRESSED NONREDUCED VOWEL PLURALIZING WITH ט-

אויטאָ 'car' → אויטאָס

עגאָ 'ego' → עגאָס

ראַדיאָ 'radio' → ראַדיאָס

4.2.2.3 Family names

Family names pluralize by suffixation of ט- (or עט- after sibilants ז, ש, ט, ס, צ, or שש).

SAMPLES OF FAMILY NAMES PLURALIZING WITH ט(ע)-

גאָלדבערג 'Goldberg' → גאָלדבערגס די 'the Goldbergs'

האַדסאָן 'Hudson' → האַדסאָנס די 'the Hudsons'

פּלודערמאַכער 'Pludermacher' → פּלודערמאַכערס די 'the Pludermachers'

ראַבינאָוויטש 'Rabinowitz' → ראַבינאָוויטשעס די 'the Rabinowitzes'

ראַפּאָרט 'Rappaport' → ראַפּאָרטס די 'the Rappaports'

4.2.2.4 Nouns ending in ט- in an unstressed syllable

Nouns ending in ט- in an unstressed final syllable usually pluralize by

suffixation of -ם.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN ם- IN AN UNSTRESSED

FINAL SYLLABLE PLURALIZING WITH ם-

אָקוואַריום 'aquarium' → אָקוואַריום־ם

לחיים [ləkháyim] '(alcoholic) drink' → לחיים־ם

שטורעם 'storm' → שטורעם־ם

4.2.2.5 Nouns ending in ן(ע)- in an unstressed final syllable

Nouns ending in ן- (or ןע-) in an unstressed final syllable usually pluralize by suffixation of -ם.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN UNSTRESSED ן(ע)-

PLURALIZING WITH ם-

וואָלקן 'cloud' → וואָלקנס

קווימען 'chimney' → קווימענס

קישן 'pillow' → קישנס

4.2.2.6 Nonhuman nouns ending in ןע-

Nonhuman nouns ending in ןע- usually pluralize by suffixation of ם-.

SAMPLES OF NONHUMAN NOUNS ENDING IN

UNSTRESSED ןע- PLURALIZING WITH ם-

זומער 'summer' → זומערס

טיגער 'tiger' → טיגערס

קלויסטער 'church' → קלויסטערס

4.2.3 Plural ending ןע-

The plural ending ןע- is frequently pronounced between [æ] and [ɛ].

4.2.3.1 Slavonic component nouns ending in a consonant

Some nouns, mostly of Slavonic derivation, pluralize by suffixation of **עס**-. There are occasional concomitant vowel changes.

SAMPLES OF SLAVONIC COMPONENT NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH **עס**-

זולִיגאַן [khuligán] 'ruffian; hooligan' → **זולִיגאַנעס** [khuligánəs]

טשחֶוּק [tshvok] 'nail' → **טשחֶוּקעס** [tshvékəs]

נודניק [núdnik] 'bore; pest; poor conversationalist' → **נודניקעס** [núdnikəs]

4.2.4 Semitic component plurals

Most Semitic component nouns are pluralized by **ים**- ([im] or [əm]) or **ות**- [əs]. Where suffixation of **ים**- or **ות**- results in a syllable being added, stress shifts to the new penultimate syllable (→ §2.3.2.1). There are frequent vowel changes in pluralization.

4.2.4.1 Semitic component plural in **ים**-

Semitic component nouns ending in a consonant are usually pluralized by suffixation of **ים**- (pronounced [im] or [əm]). A sizable minority of nouns ending in unstressed **ה**- or **ל**-, including virtually all semantically masculine agentives, also pluralize with **ים**-, dropping final **ה**-. A few non-Semitic component nouns regularly pluralize with **ים**-, e.g. **דאָקטער** '(medical) doctor' → **דאָקטוירים** [doktóyrim], **נאַר** 'fool' → **נאַרענים** [narónim], and **פּויער** 'peasant' → **פּויערים** [póyərím]. Pluralizing **ים**- used with nouns ending in **ער**- or **ער**- (→ §4.1.1.3) has a sarcastic or pejorative effect, e.g. **וואונדער** 'miracle' → **וואונדעירים** [vundéyrim] 'not-so-impressive miracles', **פּראָפּעסאָר** 'professor' → **פּראָפּעסוירים** [profəsóyrim] 'not-so-impressive professors'. The normal plurals are **וואונדערס** (also **וואונדערס**), and **פּראָפּעסאָרן** [profəsórn].

SAMPLES OF SEMITIC COMPONENT NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ים-

- גנב [gánəv] 'thief' → גנבים [ganóvim / ganóvəm]
 חבר [khávər] 'friend' → חברים [khavéyrim / khavéyrəm]
 שיכור [shíkər] 'drunkard' → שיכורים [shikúrim / shikúrəm]
 שכן [shókħn] 'neighbour' → שכנים [shkhéynim / shkhéynəm]
 רב [rov] 'rabbi' → רבנים [rabónim / rabónəm]
 שבת [shábəs] 'Saturday; Sabbath' → שבתים [shabósim / shabósəm]
 שוטה [shóytə] 'fool' → שוטים [shóytim / shóytəm]
 שונא [sóynə] 'enemy' → שונאים [sónim / sónəm]
 תלמיד [tálməd] 'student' → תלמידים [talmídīm / talmídəm]

4.2.4.2 Semitic component plural in ות-

Semitic component nouns ending in unstressed ה- or א- usually pluralize by suffixation of ות-, dropping final ה-, and falling together phonetically with phonetic system עט-. A minority of nouns ending in a consonant also pluralize by suffixation of ות-.

SAMPLES OF SEMITIC COMPONENT NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ות-

- דאגה [dáygə] 'worry' → דאגות [dáygəs]
 דוגמא [dúgmə] 'example' → דוגמות [dugmós] (var. דוגמות [dúgməs])
 חלום [khóləm] 'dream' → חלומות [khalóyməs]
 חתונה [khásənə] 'wedding' → חתונות [khásənəs]
 חתימה [khsímə] 'signature' → חתימות [khsíməs]
 טענה [táyne] 'complaint; point (in discussion)' → טענות [táynes]
 טובה [tóvə] 'favour' → טובות [tóvəs]
 לשון [lóshn] 'language' → לשונות [leshóynes]
 מקור [mákər] 'source' → מקורות [makóyres] (var. מקורים [makóyrim])
 משפחה [mishpókħə] 'family' → משפחות [mishpókħəs]
 סברה [svórə] 'supposition; possibility' → סברות [svóres]

4.2.5 Plural ending in עך-

The plural ending in עך- ([akh / akh]) is restricted to nouns ending in syllabic ל-. Where the noun is a diminutive, the composite pluralizing לעך- is obligatory (→ §§4.3.2, 4.3.3) but there are a number of non-diminutive nouns for which both עך- and ען- are acceptable, e.g. שליטל 'key' → שליטלעך or שליטלען.

SAMPLES OF NOUNS ENDING IN ל- PLURALIZING WITH עך-

- אייניקלעך → 'grandchild' אייניקל
- ברידערלעך → 'brother (lovingly) (little)' ברידערל
- יינלעך → 'boy' יינל
- מיידלעך → 'girl' מיידל
- צעטלעך → 'note' צעטל
- צענטלעך → 'tenth' צענטל
- שועסטערלעך → 'sister (lovingly) (little)' שועסטערל
- שפיצלעך → 'prank; dirty trick' שפיצל

4.2.6 Plural ending in ער-

Nouns that pluralize by suffixation of ער- do not fit into any morphological categories. They are frequently words that have been in the language since its inception. ער- may pluralize on its own, but it is frequently accompanied by vowel shifts.

4.2.6.1 ער- with no vowel change

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער-

- אײער → 'egg' אײ
- בילדער → 'picture' בילד
- האַנטעלער → 'towel' האַנטעל
- הונדערטער → 'hundred' הונדערט

4.2.6.2 ע → ם with -ער

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH -ער AND ע → ם

לענדער → 'country; land' לאַנד

מענער → 'man; husband' מאַן

פלענער → 'plan' פלאַן

פלעצער → 'place' פלאַץ

פֿלעשער → 'bottle' פֿלאַש

4.2.6.3 ע → ם with -ער

Although not reflected in the orthography of the traditional system, Semitic component פֿאַנץ [pónəm] 'face', is part of the series. It pluralizes to פֿאַנער [pénəmər].

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH -ער AND ע → ם

נערטנער → 'garden' גאַרטן

לעכער → 'hole' לאַך

רעדער → 'wheel' ראָד

4.2.6.4 י → ו with -ער

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH -ער AND י → ו

ביכער → 'book' בוך

הינער → 'hen; chicken' הון

צינגער → 'tongue' צונג

4.2.6.5 זי → וי with -ער

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH -ער AND זי → וי

בייכער → 'stomach' בויך

היזער → 'house' הויז

מילער → 'mouth' מויל

4.2.6.6 ער- with various vowels → ״

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ער- AND VARIOUS SHIFTS TO ״

ביימער 'tree' → בוים

ציין (var. ציינער) 'tooth' → צאָן

4.2.7 Plural by vowel change only

Like nouns pluralizing by suffixation of ער-, those pluralizing by vowel change alone tend to be ancient items in the language.

4.2.7.1 װ → ע

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH װ → ע

הענט 'hand' → הענט

ווענט 'wall' → ווענט

קעץ 'cat' → קעץ

קלעם 'blow (to body / ego / mood)' → קלעם

4.2.7.2 װ → ע

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH װ → ע

טעג 'day' → טעג

נעמען 'name' → נעמען

קעם 'head' → קעם

שטעט 'city' → שטעט

4.2.7.3 ו → ״

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING WITH ו → ״

ברידער 'brother' → ברידער

זין 'son' → זין

פֿיס 'foot' → פֿיס

שיך 'shoe' → שיך

4.2.7.4 זי → וי

SAMPLES OF NOUNS PLURALIZING BY זי → וי

ליז 'louse' → ליז

מיז 'mouse' → מיז

4.2.8 Same form for singular and plural

A number of nouns have plurals identical with the singular form of the noun.

4.2.8.1 Human nouns ending in -ער

Human nouns in -ער usually have no separate plural form. Minority usage does pluralize by ס- for agentives denoting professions, e.g. שניידערס 'tailors' for שניידער, שרייבערס 'writers' for שרייבער. פֿעטער 'uncle' exceptionally pluralizes by suffixation of ס-, hence פֿעטערס.

SAMPLES OF HUMAN NOUNS ENDING IN -ער WITH IDENTICAL PLURALS

אמעריקאנער 'American' → אמעריקאנער

ארבעטער 'worker' → ארבעטער

גענעטאריער 'vegetarian' → גענעטאריער

טענצער 'dancer' → טענצער

לערער 'teacher' → לערער

ענגלענדער 'Englishman' [éynglender] → ענגלענדער

קאנאדער 'Canadian' → קאנאדער

שעסטער 'sister' → שעסטער

שניידער 'tailor' → שניידער

שרייבער 'writer' → שרייבער

4.2.6.2 Various nouns with identical plurals

בייגל 'bagel' →	בייגל
בדיח 'letter' →	בדיח
פֿינגער 'finger' →	פֿינגער
פֿיש 'fish' →	פֿיש
פֿערד 'horse' →	פֿערד
פֿריינד [fraynt] 'friend' →	פֿריינד
שטערן 'star' →	שטערן

4.3 DIMINUTIVES

There is a two-tier system comprising a first diminutive and a second diminutive. In its simplest form, the first diminutive denotes 'smallness' and the second diminutive 'more smallness' or 'tinyness'. Many nouns, however, usually for morphological reasons, have no more than one of the two. The diminutives may evoke emotions and attitudes instead of, or in addition to, size. Some diminutives have lost their diminutive sense and are used as base nouns which 'happen to be' morphologically diminutive. The major diminutives are of neutral gender. Many diminutives undergo the internal vowel shifts $\text{א/אָ} \rightarrow \text{ע}$; $\text{י} \rightarrow \text{יִ}$; $\text{וִ} \rightarrow \text{וֵ}$, various $\rightarrow \text{וֵ}$. They are the same shifts applicable in pluralization (\rightarrow §§4.2.6.2 – 4.2.6.6).

4.3.1 Morphology of the first diminutive

The first diminutive is formed by suffixation of syllabic ל- (\rightarrow §2.2.8). Its plural is formed by further suffixation of עך- [akh / akh], giving plural first diminutive suffix לעך- where ל, at the beginning of a syllable, is not syllabic.

SAMPLES OF DERIVATION OF THE FIRST DIMINUTIVE

- (די) טישלעך (דאָס) 'little table', pl. טישלעך (די) 'table' → טיש (דער) 'cat' → קעצלעך (די) 'little cat; kitten', pl. קעצלעך (די) 'book' → ביכלעך (דאָס) 'little book' pl. ביכלעך (די)

4.3.1.1 Nouns ending in ן-

Nouns ending in ן- attract דל- rather than ל, and pluralize by further suffixation of עך-, e.g. שטיין (דער) 'stone' → שטינדל (דאָס) 'little stone; pebble', pl. שטינדלעך (די).

4.3.1.2 Nouns ending in ל-

Nouns ending in ל- attract ל(ע)- rather than ל, and pluralize by further suffixation of עך-, e.g. מויל (דאָס) 'mouth' → מילעכל (דאָס) (or מילכל) 'little mouth', pl. מילעכלעך (די) or מילכלעך (די).

4.3.1.3 Semitic component plurals

Semitic component plurals in ים- are diminutivized by suffixation of לעך-, occasionally with accompanying semantic nuances, e.g. חברים [khavéyrim] 'friends' → חבריםלעך [khavéyrimlakh] 'shady friends; cronies' (cf. sg. חבר [kháver] 'friend'); ענינים [inyónim] 'matters' → עניניםלעך [inyónimlakh] 'little matters' (cf. sg. ענין [inyan] 'matter').

4.3.1.4 Nouns with no first diminutive

Nouns ending in syllabic ל- (e.g. לעפל (דער) 'spoon'), and nouns stressed two or more syllables from the last (e.g. אָנשיקעניש (דיִדאָס) [ónshikenish] 'nuisance; pain in the neck') cannot attract the first diminutive. Nouns ending in a vowel (e.g. כּמאַרע (די) 'threatening cloud') are incapable of attracting the first diminutive, but personal names occasionally accept it (→ §4.3.7).

4.3.2 Morphology of the second diminutive

The second diminutive is formed by suffixation of עלע [ələ, alə]. Its plural is formed by further suffixation of ך-. The resulting sequence עלעך- is pronounced [alakh], [aləkh] or [ələkh] (→ §2.1.2.3).

SAMPLES OF THE SECOND DIMINUTIVE

(די) טישעלעך (דאָס) טישעלע 'table' (דער) טיש
 (די) קעצעלעך (דאָס) קעצעלע 'cat' (די) קאץ
 (די) ביצעלעך (דאָס) ביצעלע 'book' (דאָס) בוך

4.3.2.1 Nouns ending in ל-

Nouns ending in ל- attract the second diminutive by means of the ל assuming the added role of the ל of second diminutive suffix עלע-, with the two required וs added on either side, e.g. (דער) לעפּל 'spoon' → (די) לעפּעלעך (דאָס) לעפּעלע.

4.3.2.2 Nouns ending in an unstressed vowel

Nouns ending in an unstressed vowel (i.e. ו-, ה-, or א), attract the second diminutive by means of the unstressed vowel assuming the added role of the first ו of second diminutive suffix עלע-, with the remaining sequence לע- suffixed thereafter, e.g. (די) פּראַגע 'question' → (דאָס) פּראַגעלע 'little question', pl. (די) פּראַגעלעך; (די) גמרא [gemóra] 'Gemora / Gemara (major part of the Talmud; select reading therefrom; cf. §§7.3.2.1, 15.17.15)' → (דאָס) גמראלע [gemóralə] 'brief reading / lesson of the Talmud', pl. (די) גמראלעך [gemóralakh].

4.3.2.3 Nouns with no second diminutive

Nouns ending in a consonant with stress on a syllable other than the last (e.g. (דער) פלימעניק [pliménik] 'nephew') cannot attract the second diminutive.

Those ending in syllabic ל- are exempted from the restriction, hence (דער) פֿידל 'fiddle' → פֿידעלע (דאָס) 'little fiddle (endearing)'. Nouns ending in syllabic ן- rarely accept the second diminutive. When they do, the ן- is dropped, e.g. שטעקן (דער) 'stick' → שטעקעלע (דאָס) [shtékale] 'little stick'.

4.3.3 Suffix קע- with inanimate nouns

Suffix קע- used with inanimate nouns does not usually form a diminutive noun from a base noun. It is rather used to coin nouns denoting objects that happen to be small, e.g. אַגראַפֿעקע [agráfekə] 'safety pin', קאַסעטעקע [kasétkə] 'cassette tape'. Where base and derived forms do exist, the derived קע- form usually signifies an object distinct from its base noun, e.g. מאַשינקע (די) (also שרייבֿמאַשינקע) 'typewriter' from מאַשין 'machine'. It occasionally invokes a humorous mood, e.g. מאַכאַרַיקע (די) [makharáykə] 'contraption; gizmo'. Unlike other diminutives, those in קע- are feminine. Cf. §4.3.7.1 on קע- with proper names.

4.3.4 Diminutives as new base nouns

While many diminutives represent inflections of their base nouns denoting smallness (first diminutive) or tinytness (second diminutive), many diminutives of both categories have acquired lives of their own by assuming special connotations, e.g. הויז (דאָס) 'house', הויזל (דאָס) 'brothel' from הויז; פֿינגער (דער) 'finger', פֿינגערל (דאָס) 'ring' from פֿינגער; חן [kheyn] 'grace; beauty', חנדל (דאָס) [kheyndl] 'flirtatious / coquettish gesture' from חן. In a number of instances, the notion of size is retained as a secondary factor in tandem with the diminutive itself becoming the everyday name for a thing.

e.g. **קעמל** (דעם) 'comb', **קעמעלע** (דעם) 'pocket comb', from **קאם** (דער) which is now so rare that its use would imply a rather huge comb. In a number of instances, the base form of a noun and a diminutive thereof denote related but distinct objects, e.g. **זיינער** (דער) 'clock (in general); wall clock; pocket watch' vs. **זיינערל** (דעם) 'wristwatch'.

4.3.5 The second diminutive as sentimentality marker

The second diminutive may mark warmth, affection and sentimentality with nonhuman nouns. In many instances, the first diminutive marks physical reduction in size while the second diminutive invokes affection. For some speakers, the pronunciation of the first **ע** in singular **עלע-** and both **ע**s in plural ending **עלעך** increasingly approach [a] in direct proportion to increasing sentimentality, hence the frequent sentimental realizations [-alə] and [alakh] (→ §§ 2.1.2.2 – 2.1.2.3).

SAMPLES OF THE SECOND DIMINUTIVE AS SENTIMENTALITY MARKER

הונט (דער) 'dog' → **הינטל** (דעם) → **הינטעלע** (דעם)
לאמפ (דער) 'lamp' → **לעמפל** (דעם) → **לעמפעלע** (דעם)
קאפ (דער) 'head' → **קעפל** (דעם) → **קעמעלע** (דעם)

4.3.6 The first diminutive as pejorative

The first diminutive applied to masculine agentives, especially those denoting professions, is decidedly pejorative. It generally means that the person is either incompetent at his work, not a nice person, or both.

SAMPLES OF THE FIRST DIMINUTIVE AS PEJORATIVE

אדוואקאט (דער) 'lawyer' → **אדוואקאטל** (דעם) 'small time lawyer'
לערער (דער) 'teacher' → **לערערל** (דעם) 'bad teacher'

מאַלער (דער) 'artist' → מאַלערל (דאָס) 'very minor artist'
 שרייבער (דער) 'writer' → שרייבערל (דאָס) 'bad writer; graphomaniac'

4.3.7 Diminutives as love markers

The first, and, especially, the second diminutive can be applied to traditional Jewish proper forenames to denote warmth, affection and love. While most prolific for children's names, diminutive forenames are often retained through life. On the whole, they follow the morphological patterns of diminutives generally (→ §§4.3.2 – 4.3.3.4). Note, however, that על(ע)- (→ §4.3.1.2) does not occur with proper names, and that names ending in a vowel may occasionally accept the first diminutive (unlike common nouns which cannot → §4.3.1.4).

SAMPLES OF DIMINUTIVES AS LOVE MARKERS

אַבראַם [avróʔm] (m.) → אַבראַמל [avrémi] → אַבראַמעלע [avrémalə]

חיה [xáyə] (f.) → חיהלע [xáyalə]

לאה [léyə] (f.) → לאהלע [léyalə]

משה [móyʃə] (m.) → משהל [móyʃhi] → משהלע [móyʃhalə]

סענדער [sénder] (m.) → סענדערל [sénderl]

שמואל [shmúʔl] (m.) → שמועלע [shmúʔalə]

סרה [sóʔə] (f.) → סרהל [sóʔl] → סרהלע [sóʔalə]

4.3.7.1 Suffix קע- as love marker

As an alternative to the usual ל- and עלע- diminutivizing suffixes, love may be shown by קע- suffixed to proper forenames. The קע- forms occur most extensively in Northeastern Yiddish. For increased endearment, לע- may follow upon קע-, subject to the usual morphological constraints (→ §§4.3.1.4,

4.3.2.4, 4.3.7). The compounded suffix **קעלע-** is usually restricted to children's names and use as a term of endearment in intimate relationships.

SAMPLES OF SUFFIXES **קע-** AND **קעלע-** AS LOVE MARKERS

אַבראַם [avróm] (m.) → **אַבראַמקע** [avrémkə] → **אַבראַמקעלע** [avrémkalə]
חַיָּה [kháyə] (f.) → **חַיָּהקע** [kháykə] → **חַיָּהקעלע** [kháykalə]
לֵאָה [léyə] (f.) → **לֵאָהקע** [léykə] → **לֵאָהקעלע** [léykalə]
מֹשֶׁה [móyshə] (m.) → **מֹשֶׁהקע** [móyshkə] → **מֹשֶׁהקעלע** [móyshkalə]
טענדרער [séndər] (m.) → **טענדרערקע** [séndərəkə]
שמואל [shmúəl] (m.) → **שמואלקע** [shmúíkə] → **שמואלקעלע** [shmúíkalə]
סָרָה [sórah] (f.) → **סָרָהקע** [sórkə] → **סָרָהקעלע** [sórkalə]

4.3.7.2 Suffixes **יק-** and **טשיק-** as love markers

יק- is most frequent with masculine forenames ending in **ל-**. The masculine forename **אַיִצִּיק** has developed as a popular alternate to the more formal **יצחק** [yítskhok], which corresponds with the Biblical 'Isaac'. Its diminutive is **אַיִצִּיקל**. Occasionally, **צע-** (or **טשע-**) may be encountered as a feminine counterpart to **יק-**, e.g. **חַנְצֵע** [khántsa] or **חַנְטשע** [khántsha] from **חַנָּה** [kháne]. A variant love marker is **טשיק-**, which may replace the last syllable of the stem of the name, e.g. **אַלִּיָּהוּ** [eylióhu] → **עלִּטְשִׁיק** [éltshik] (m.), with spelling according to the phonetic system for ease of reading. For increased endearment, **ל-** may follow upon **יק-** or **טשיק-**. The compounded suffixes **יקל-** and **טשיקל-** are usually restricted to children's names and to use as terms of endearment in intimate relationships. **יק-** or **טשיק-** do not generally trigger internal vowel shifts.

SAMPLES OF SUFFIX **יק-** AND **טשיק-** AS LOVE MARKERS

יִשְׂרָאֵל [yisró(ə)] (m.) → **יִשְׂרָאֵלִיק** [(yi)srólik] → **יִשְׂרָאֵלִיקל** [(yi)srólikl]
שמואל [shmúəl] (m.) → **שמואלִיק** [shmúílik] → **שמואלִיקל** [shmúílikl]
אַברַם [avróm] (m.) → **אַברַמְטְשִׁיק** [avrómtshik]

4.4 COMPOUND NOUNS

A compound noun comprises a noun joined together with another word (an adjective, verb stem, or another noun) to function as a single new noun. The first member of the compound (which needn't be a noun) has primary stress. Stress in the second (which must be a noun) is lowered in deference to the compound (→§§2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.4). Gender and plural are determined by the second. There is considerable variation in the written language as to whether compound nouns are written as one word, as two, or hyphenated. Well established and familiar compounds are written as one word (except where one of the two is spelled according to the traditional system). The dynamic tendency that is developing is implicitly linked with pronunciation. Where a well established compound is pronounced as one word, with no internal phonetic pause, it is written as one word. Less well known compounds, and those created at will, are generally written as two words or hyphenated. The longer the compound, the stronger the inclination to write it as two words. There is a clear (if slow-moving) trend away from hyphenation. In the samples that follow, internal phonetic pause is marked by |.

SAMPLES OF COMPOUND NOUNS

auto mechanic [o(y)tomobíl | məkhaníkər] (דער) אויטאָמאָביל מעכאַניקער

university student [universitét | studènt] (דער) אוניווערסיטעט סטודענט

homework [héymarbat] (די) הײַמאַרבעט

traditional yeshiva student [yeshívaḥ | bəḥor] (דער) ישיבֿה־בֿחור

teacher training course [léraḥ | kùrs] (דער) לערער־קורס

great-grandfather [éltarzeyde] (דער) עלטער־זידע

kindergarten [kíndergortn] (דער) קינדער־גאַרטן

pickpocket [késheṇagànev] (דער) קעשענע־גנבֿ

registration form [registrátsya | biànk] (דער) רעגיסטראַציע בלאַנק

title page [shárblat] (דער) שער־בלאַט

4.4.1 Compounding ך

Many compounds comprising two nouns have a ך (often pronounced between [s] and [z]) suffixed to the first to mark compounding and ease pronunciation. The ך is not a productive compound-forming suffix anymore. It is usually retained where it exists in stock compounds, but some traditional ך compounds have developed alternate forms without it. Compounding ך is frequent in instances where the first member is אַרבעט 'work', לעבן [ləbm] 'life', פֿאָלק 'people; folk; nation' or a noun ending in suffix ונג. The hyphen is usually used in writing, except where the compound is pronounced as a single word, e.g. לאַנדסמאַן [lántsman] 'compatriot' (lit. 'land man'). Compounding ך is encountered extensively in journalistic prose, and is especially prominent in political and scientific terminology of the twentieth century.

SAMPLES OF COMPOUNDING ך

- development opportunities אָנטוויקלונגס־מעגלעכקײַטן (די)
 plan of action (lit. 'work plan') אַרבעטס־פּלאַן (דער)
 ministry of education דערציאונגס־מיניסטעריום (דער)
 question of life or death (lit. 'life question') לעבנס־פּראָגע (די)
 folksong פֿאָלקסליד (דאָס)
 folktale פֿאָלקס־מעשע [fóiks | màysə] (די)

4.4.2 Compounding ך

Many compounds comprising two nouns have a ך suffixed to the first as a compounding marker. It is, generally speaking, no longer productive but is retained where it exists. It is most consistently used in names of trees.

SAMPLES OF COMPOUNDING ך

pear tree באָרנבוים

weekly newspaper **הַפֿאַנבלאַט**

orange juice **מאַראַנצן-זאַַפֿט**

fig tree **פֿיגנבױם**

magician (lit. 'maker of tricks') **קונצנמאַכער** (דער)

4.4.3 The construct state in the Semitic component

Compound nouns in European languages comprise describer (attribute) plus described (head) as evident in the Yiddish compounds cited. Semitic languages, on the other hand, have the construct state with reverse order: described (head) followed by describer (attribute), corresponding with the use of 'of' in European languages. Yiddish preserves a large number of Hebrew and Aramaic constructs as stock phrases. Stress is usually on the second element. Most constructs occur within the Semitic component but there are a few exceptions, e.g. **טױף-האַלדן** (דער) [sɔʔvɔkʰ] 'weekend'. Constructs are hyphenated or written separately.

SAMPLES OF CONSTRUCTS

waste of (valuable) time **ביטול-זמן** [bitl zmán] (דער)

traditional rabbinical court **בית-דין** [bézdɪn] (דער)

rabbinical court proceeding / trial **דין-תורה** [dɪn tóʔrə] (דער/די)

spinal cord **חוט-השדרה** [khut ashédʁə] (דער)

a taste of paradise (said esp. of good food) **טעם נן-עדן** [tam ganéydn] (דער)

eclipse of the sun **ליקוי-חמה** [likə khámə] (די)

place of rest; refuge **מקום-מנוחה** [mòkəmə mənúkhə] (דער)

devotion, selflessness, self-sacrifice **חסידת-נפש** [məstrəs néfəsh] (דער/די)

head of a traditional Talmudic academy **ראש-ישיבה** [rosh yəshíʔvə] (דער)

wild idea; temporary insanity **רוח-שטול** [ruəkh shʔtʊl] (דער)

tuition fee **שכר-לימוד** [skhar líməd] (דער)

4.4.3.1 Productive construct former בעל

בעל [bal] forms a large number of Semitic component constructs within Yiddish. Its plural form is בעלי [bále]. A number of בעל nouns are however pluralized solely by pluralization of the second element (by Semitic component pluralizing suffixes ים [-əm/im] and ות [-əs], and occasionally by phonetic system ס-). בעל is in effect a masculine agentive former, but a few בעל constructions have evolved feminine equivalents. Its force derives from the older sense of 'master of'. It joins naturally only with Semitic component nouns. Constructs formed with בעל may be hyphenated or written separately. Note that the phonetic system is used for באַלעבאָס [baləbós] 'boss; married man; master of the household', and its plural באַלעבאָסן [baləbátim]. The plural using the traditional system (בעלי-בתי), may also be encountered. Where the singular בעל-הבית is encountered the reference is usually to the learned [baal habáyis], as in Ashkenazic Hebrew, referring strictly to 'master of the household' in traditional contexts. בעל-מצוה [balmítsvə] is a traditional alternate to בר-מצוה [barmítsvə] 'Bar Mitzvah'.

SAMPLES OF CONSTRUCT AGENTIVES WITH בעל

- debtor [baləkhóyvəs] (pl. בעלי חובות [baləkhóyvəs])
 dreamer [baləkhəlóyməs] (pl. בעלי חלומות [baləkhəlóyməs])
 master; artisan [balməlókhəs] (pl. בעל מלאכות [balməlókhəs])
 coachman; simple man [balagóla] (pl. בעל עגלות [balagóla])
 man who earns a good living [balparnósə] (pl. בעלי פרנסה [balparnósə])
 reader of the Torah in synagogue [balóytrə] (pl. בעל קורא [balóytrə])
 kindhearted, merciful person [balrákhmim] (pl. בעלי רחמים [balrákhmim])
 passionate man [baltáyvə(nik)] (pl. בעל תאווה(ניק) [baltáyvə(nik)])
 passionate woman [baltáyvənitsə] (pl. בעל תאווהניצע [baltáyvənitsə])
 practical person [baltákhəs] (pl. בעלי תכלית [baltákhəs])
 penitent; returnee to Judaism [baltshúvə] (pl. בעלי תשובה [baltshúvə])

4.4.4 Compound names

Most traditional forenames are double-barrelled. It is important to bear in mind that the second of these is not a 'middle name' or 'middle initial'. The two names are used together as one. Some traditional compound forenames, especially male names deriving from names of animals, comprise the Hebrew and Yiddish for the 'same' name, e.g. דוב־בער [dovbér]. דוב is the Hebrew for Yiddish בער 'bear'. Analogously, אריה־לייב [aryeláyev], lit. 'lion lion', צבי־הירש [tsvínířsh], lit. 'deer deer' and זאב־חנקל [ze(y)vóif], lit. 'wolf wolf'. The second of the two compounded names is stressed. The individuals so known formally would be known to their friends and relatives by the diminutives of the second (Yiddish) name alone – ליב (or בערקע), ליב (or בערקע), (לייב), הערש (or הירשקע) and חעלחל (or חעלפֿקע). Cf. §§5.8.1, 5.14.2, 5.15.1.2 on traditional names.

SAMPLES OF MALE COMPOUND NAMES

Arn-Véivl אהרן־חעלחל
 Hirshə-Dóvid הירשע־דוד
 Yoshə-Bér יאָשע־בער
 Moyshə-Kálmən משה־קלמן
 Shloymə-Zálmən שלמה־זלמן

SAMPLES OF FEMALE COMPOUND NAMES

Blumə-Díshə בלומע־דישע
 Khayə-Sóra חיה־שרה
 Mashə-Dvóyra מאַשע־דבורה
 Simə-Léya סימע־לאה

5 NOUN PHRASES

5.0 OVERVIEW

A noun phrase is a noun alone or with its articles and/or adjectives. Noun phrases occur in three cases (nominative, accusative and dative) determined by the noun phrase's relation to the verb phrase. It is the articles and adjectives within the noun phrase that regularly inflect for case and for gender. With a few easily defined exceptions, Yiddish nouns themselves do not inflect.

5.1 CASE

Case is the situation of the noun phrase relative to the verb phrase. Because the singular noun itself does not usually inflect, its case is evident from its articles and adjectives, which do. While case exists abstractly across the board, its morphological effects are evident only in the singular. In the plural, the definite article is always װ, and the adjective ending always ן-, irrespective of case or gender.

5.1.1 Nominative (subject)

Nominative is the situation of the noun phrase as subject of a sentence. The noun phrase in nominative is not dominated by any verb phrase. It simply

exists, or itself dominates a verb phrase.

SAMPLES OF NOUN PHRASES IN NOMINATIVE

The fellow is here דער בחור [המאכט] איז דא

The woman is reading די פרוי לייענט

The house is pretty דאס הויז איז שיין

5.1.2 Accusative (verbal object)

Accusative is the situation of the noun phrase as the direct object of a verb.

SAMPLES OF NOUN PHRASES IN ACCUSATIVE

I see the fellow איך זע דעם בחור

I'm photographing the woman איך פאטאגראפיר די פרוי

I'm repairing the house איך פארריכט דאס הויז

5.1.3 Dative (prepositional object)

Dative is the situation of the noun phrase as the direct object of any preposition (and hence, frequently, the indirect object of a verb).

SAMPLES OF NOUN PHRASES IN DATIVE

I'm speaking to the fellow איך רעד מיט דעם בחור

I'm running from the girl איך לויף פון דער מיידל

I'm looking at the house איך קוק אויף [at] דעם הויז

5.1.3.1 Dative with understood preposition

A number of verbs, most frequently with a human object, impose dative upon their noun phrase, although no preposition appears. These are instances of the understood preposition. There is no preposition to mediate between verb phrase and noun phrase, but the action of the verb nevertheless does not

'strike' its object directly or physically. The most frequent prepositions left out and understood are **ל** 'to' and **פֿאַר** 'for'. Depending on its use in a sentence, one and the same verb may impose accusative or dative (with understood preposition). Cf. e.g. accusative **איך שיק זי אין קאַליפֿאָרניע** 'I'm sending her to California' vs. dative **איך שיק איר אַ ברייף** 'I'm sending her a letter' (understood preposition **צו**); accusative **נימֿען מיר** 'Find me!' vs. dative **נימֿען מיר אַ צימער** 'Find me a room' (understood preposition **פֿאַר**). On accusative and dative pronouns → §§ 6.1.2 – 6.1.3.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF DATIVE WITH UNDERSTOOD PREPOSITION

I'm writing (to) the fellow **איך שרייב דעם בחור**
 I'll tell the woman what I know **איך העל זאָגן דער פֿרוי וואָס איך ווייס**

VERBS THAT MAY IMPOSE DATIVE WITHOUT A PREPOSITION

believe (somebody) **גלייבן** [gléybm]

give (something to somebody) **געבן** [gébm]

tell; recount (to somebody) **דערציילן**

show (to somebody) **ווייזן**

say; tell **זאָגן**

telephone **טעלעפֿאָנירן**

hint; allude **מרחיז** [marámaz] זיין

answer; reply (to somebody) **ענטפֿערן**

send (to somebody) **שיקן**

write (to somebody) **שרייבן** [shráybm]

5.1.3.2 לערנען and פֿרעגן

פֿרעגן 'ask (a question)' and **לערנען** 'teach' (→ §7.3.2.1) may take accusative, e.g. **פֿרעג זי** 'Ask her (familiar)!' and **לערנט זי** 'Teach her (formal)!'. Both may be replaced by alternate forms with prepositions (that

naturally impose dative) – **לערנען מיט [ba] 'ask (of)' and 'teach',**
 e.g. **פֿרעג בײַ אירן [ba] 'Ask (familiar) her!' and לערנט מיט אירן 'Teach**
(formal) her!'

5.2 INDEFINITE ARTICLES

The indefinite article, 'a(n)', which precedes the noun, is always singular. It is **אַ** with nouns beginning with a consonant, **אַן** with nouns beginning with a vowel, hence **אַ פֿראַגע** 'a question' vs. **אַן ענטפֿער** 'an answer'. The indefinite article does not inflect for case or gender.

5.3 SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES

The singular definite article inflects for the gender (→ §4.1) and case (→ §5.1) of its noun.

5.3.1 Singular definite articles in nominative

The singular definite article 'the' has the following forms in nominative.

masculine:	דער
feminine:	די
neutral:	דאָס

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES IN NOMINATIVE

The student (m.) is here **דער סטודענט איז דאָ**

The student (f.) is here די סטודענטקע [studéntak] איז דאָ

The house is pretty דאָס הויז איז שיין

5.3.2 Singular definite articles in accusative:

only masculine inflects

The masculine singular definite article inflects in accusative. Feminine and neutral are identical with their nominative forms.

masculine:	דער	→	דעם
feminine:			די
neutral:			דאָס

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES IN ACCUSATIVE

I see the student (m.) איך זע דעם סטודענט

I see the student (f.) איך זע די סטודענטקע

I see the house איך זע דאָס הויז

5.3.3 Singular definite articles in dative:

all three inflect

masculine:	דער	→	דעם
feminine:	די	→	דער
neutral:	דאָס	→	דעם

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR DEFINITE ARTICLES IN DATIVE

I'm looking at the student (m.) איך קוק אויף דעם סטודענט [af]

איך קוק אויף דעם סטודענטקע I'm looking at the student (f.)

איך קוק אויף דעם הויז I'm looking at the house

5.3.3.1 Contractions of prepositions with דעם

דעם, the masculine and neutral definite article in dative, contracts with a number of prepositions to form a single word. These contracted forms are acceptable in all styles, including the most formal.

אויף דעם [avdem] → אויפֿן [afn] 'on / to the'

אונטער דעם → אונטערן 'under the'

אויבער דעם → אויבערן 'over the'

אין דעם → אינעם 'in the'

אָן דעם → אָנעם 'without the'

ביי דעם [badem] → ביים [bam] 'at the' (→ §15.1)

ביז דעם → ביזן (N.E. var. בידל) 'until the'

דורך דעם [du(r)kh] → דורכֿן 'through the'

לויט דעם → לויטן 'according to the'

מיט דעם → מיטן 'with the'

נאָך דעם [noghdem] → נאָכֿן 'after the'

פֿאַר דעם → פֿאַרן 'before / for the'

פֿון דעם → פֿונעם 'from / of the'

צוליב דעם [tsulibm] → צוליבן 'because of the'

צו דעם → צום 'to the'

5.3.3.2 Prepositions without definite articles

The masculine and neutral definite articles may be omitted with the prepositions אין 'in; to', פֿון 'from' and לעבן [lébm] 'near', if no adjective intervenes between the preposition and the noun that is its object. The feminine definite article is usually retained, e.g. דער סטאַנציע לעבן [lébm]

'near the station' but it too may be omitted with גאָס (די) 'street' and (די) שטאָט 'city'.

SAMPLES OF אַין, פֿון AND לעבן WITHOUT DEFINITE ARTICLES

Let's meet in the building (- [binyan] בּנין (דער בּנין

It's not far from the house (- דאָס הויז (דאָס הויז

It's wet in the street (- גאָס (די גאָס

5.4 PLURAL DEFINITE ARTICLES

The plural definite article is always די.

SAMPLES OF PLURAL DEFINITE ARTICLES

I see the students (m.) איך זע די סטודענטן

The students (f.) are here די סטודענטקעס זינען דאָ

I'm looking at the houses איך קוק אויף די הייזער

5.5 SINGULAR ADJECTIVES

Singular adjectives inflect for the case and gender of the noun they modify. They are unaffected by articles, except for the neutral indefinite which loses its inflection when used with an indefinite article in nominative and accusative. It optionally loses its inflection in dative.

5.5.1 Singular adjectives in nominative

Endings are -ע- in masculine and -ע- in feminine and neutral definite. There is no ending in neutral indefinite. Model adjective is גוט 'good'. Definite and

indefinite articles are supplied to illustrate agreement.

masculine definite: דער נוטער

masculine indefinite: א נוטער

feminine definite: די נוטע

feminine indefinite: א נוטע

neutral definite: דאס נוטע

neutral indefinite: א נוט

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR ADJECTIVES IN NOMINATIVE

masculine

The good student (m.) is here דער נוטער סטודענט איז דא

A good student (m.) is here א נוטער סטודענט איז דא

feminine

The good student (f.) is here די נוטע סטודענטקע איז דא

A good student (f.) is here א נוטע סטודענטקע איז דא

neutral

The good house is pretty דאס נוטע הויז איז שיין

A good house is pretty א נוט הויז איז שיין

5.5.2 Singular adjectives in accusative:

only masculine inflects

The masculine ending, -ער, inflects to -ן. Feminine and neutral remain uninflected. Model adjective is גוט 'good'. Definite and indefinite articles are supplied to illustrate agreement.

masculine definite: דער נוסער → דעם נוסן

masculine indefinite: א נוסער → א נוסן

feminine definite: די נוסע

feminine indefinite: א נוסע

neutral definite: דאָס נוסע

neutral indefinite: א נוס

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR ADJECTIVES IN ACCUSATIVE

masculine

I see the good student (m.) איך זע דעם נוסן סטודענט

I see a good student (m.) איך זע א נוסן סטודענט

feminine

I see the good student (f.) איך זע די נוסע סטודענטקע

I see a good student (f.) איך זע א נוסע סטודענטקע

neutral

I see the good house איך זע דאָס נוסע הויז

I see a good house איך זע א נוס הויז

5.5.3 Singular adjectives in dative:

all three inflect

All three genders inflect, but inflection is optional for the neutral indefinite. Model adjective is גוט 'good'. Definite and indefinite articles are supplied to illustrate agreement.

masculine definite: דער נוסער → דעם נוסן

masculine indefinite: א נוסער → א נוסן

feminine definite:	<u>די</u> <u>נומע</u>	→	<u>דער</u> <u>נומער</u>
feminine indefinite:	<u>אַ</u> <u>נומע</u>	→	<u>אַ</u> <u>נומער</u>
neutral definite:	<u>דאָס</u> <u>נומע</u>	→	<u>דעם</u> <u>נומן</u>
neutral indefinite:	<u>אַ</u> <u>נום</u>	→	(<u>אַ</u> <u>נומן</u>)

SAMPLES OF SINGULAR ADJECTIVES IN DATIVE

masculine

I'm looking at the good student (m.) איך קוק אויף [אַ] דעם נומן סטודענט

I'm looking at a good student (m.) איך קוק אויף אַ נומן סטודענט

feminine

I'm looking at the good student (f.) איך קוק אויף דער נומער סטודענטקע

I'm looking at a good student (f.) איך קוק אויף אַ נומער סטודענטקע

neutral

I'm looking at the good house איך קוק אויף דעם נומן הויז

I'm looking at a good house איך קוק אויף אַ נומן הויז

5.5.4 Variants of inflected adjective ending ן-

The masculine and neutral adjective ending ן- has several variants, depending on how the adjective stem ends. Following ה or a stressed vowel or diphthong, it is -ען (e.g. האַרעם 'warm' → האַרעמען, בלוי 'blue' → בלויען). Following נ it is -עם (e.g. שיין 'beautiful' → שינעם). The adjective נײַ 'new' anomalously takes -עם, hence נײַעם. Note that ן- is retained in inflected adjective endings following -נג and -נק. Cf. §2.2.9.

5.5.5 Inflected adjectives in letter formulas

The three alternative salutations are inflecting adjectives. They are מייערער

(lit. 'dear') and ליבער (lit. 'beloved') for friendly letters, and חשובער [khóshaver] (lit. 'esteemed; respected') for more formal letters. The most common is טיערער. The -ער ending is used for masculine, the -ע ending for feminine and plural. Preposition מיט 'with' usually launches the closing greeting, e.g. מיט פֿרײַנדשאַפֿט 'with friendship'. Any adjectives in the closing greeting inflect as usual, e.g. מיט פֿרײַנדלעכע גרוסן 'with kind (lit. 'friendly') regards', and its singular counterpart מיט פֿרײַנדלעכן גרוס. Possessive pronouns (→ §6.2.1.1) are used for signing off – דיין 'Your (familiar)' and אייער 'your (formal)'. On dating letters → §13.3.4.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVAL SALUTATIONS

Dear Debbie טיערע דעבי

Dear Alex טיערער אלעקס

Dear Colleagues טיערע קאלעגן

Dear Editor חשובער רעדאַקטאָר

5.6 PLURAL ADJECTIVES

The plural adjective ending is -ע in all cases and genders.

SAMPLES OF PLURAL ADJECTIVES

I'm looking at the good students (m.) איך קוק אויף די גוטע סטודענטן

The good students (f.) are here די גוטע סטודענטקעס זינגען דאָ

I see the good houses איך זע די גוטע הייזער

5.7 PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

Predicate adjectives describe their noun from a greater distance than the

more frequently used attributive adjectives. They follow **איז** 'is' and **זײַנען** 'are' or other verbs of being (e.g. **בלייבן** 'remain', **שטיין** 'stand'). They occur only in nominative.

5.7.1 Singular predicate adjectives without an article

Singular predicate adjectives without an article are uninflected. The adjective stem appears on its own. Whether the noun has a definite or indefinite article does not affect the predicate adjective. The construction may be used to make a general statement.

SAMPLES OF THE PREDICATE ADJECTIVE WITHOUT AN ARTICLE

The table is white **דער טיש איז וײַס**

The story is long **די מעשה [מַאָסָה] איז לאַנג**

The house is new **דאָס הױז איז נײַ**

A forest is beautiful (= Forests are beautiful) **אַ װאַלד איז שײַן**

5.7.2 Singular predicate adjectives with indefinite article

Predicate adjectives with the indefinite article agree with their nouns as adjectives generally do (→ §5.5) except for the neutral indefinite which attracts suffix **ט**-. They usually modify nouns that themselves have a definite article. Repetition of that definite article with the predicate adjective would endow the construction with comparative force (→ §5.10.2). Model adjective is **גוט** 'good'. Indefinite articles are supplied.

masculine: **אַ גוטער**

feminine: **אַ גוטע**

neutral: **אַ גוטס**

SAMPLES OF PREDICATE ADJECTIVES WITH INDEFINITE ARTICLE

The table is white (/ a white one) דער טיש איז אַ װײַסער

The story is long (/ a long one) די מעשה איז אַ לאַנגע

The house is good (/ a good one) דאָס הויז איז אַ גוטע

5.7.3 Plural predicate adjectives

Plural predicate adjectives may be uninflected. Alternatively, they may have the plural װ- ending which has the force of English 'ones' used to avoid repeating a noun. Plural predicate adjectives tend to have demonstrative force and the definite article preceding their nouns is often best translated 'these' (→ §6.3).

SAMPLES OF PLURAL PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

masculine

The tables are white די טישן זײַנען װײַס

The tables are white ones די טישן זײַנען װײַסע

feminine

The stories are long די מעשיות [máysas] זײַנען לאַנג

The stories are long ones די מעשיות [máysas] זײַנען לאַנגע

neutral

The houses are new די הײזער זײַנען נײַ

The houses are new ones די הײזער זײַנען נײַע

5.8 ADJECTIVES FOLLOWING THE NOUN

Adjectives may follow the noun with an article intervening (resulting in repetition of the article). They inflect as do normal attributive adjectives (→ §5.5). The construction is particularly prominent in poetry, folktales and

certain narrative styles.

SAMPLES OF USE OF ADJECTIVES FOLLOWING THE NOUN

An old tree stood over here אַ בױם אָן אַלטער איז דאָ געשטאַנען

I saw the old tree איך האָב געזען דעם בױם דעם אַלטן

5.8.1 Adjectives following the noun as proper names

In East European villages, an adjective with definite article describing a person, with definite article, following the name, was on occasion used as a name by which an individual was known, e.g. יאָסל דער רױטער 'Yosl the redhead', שמואל-יאַנקל דער מלמד [shmulyáinkl der meláməd] 'Shmúal-Yankl the school teacher' (from מלמד 'teacher in a traditional חדר [khéydar] or primary school'). A number of figures from ancient Jewish history, mostly biblical, are known in Yiddish by their traditional Hebrew names following the same pattern, i.e. name plus descriptive title. Cf. §§4.4.4, 5.14.2, 5.15.1.2 on traditional names.

SAMPLES OF TRADITIONAL NAMES FROM ANCIENT JEWISH HISTORY

Adam (lit. 'Adam the First') [òdəm horíshn] אדם הראשון

Abraham (lit. 'Abraham our Father') [avròm ovínu] אברהם אבינו

Moses (lit. 'Moses our Teacher') [mòyshə rabéynu] משה רבינו

Deborah (lit. 'Deborah the Prophetess') [dvòyrə hanəvíə] דבורה הנביאה

Samson (lit. 'Samson the Strong Man') [shímshn hagíber] שמשון הגיבור

David (lit. 'David the King') [dòvid haméyləkh] דוד המלך

Solomon (lit. 'Solomon the King') [shlòymaméyləkh] שלמה המלך

Elijah (lit. 'Elijah the Prophet') [eyliòhu hanóvi] אליהו הנביא

Isaiah (lit. 'Isaiah the Prophet') [yashàye hanóvi] ישעיהו הנביא

Jeremiah (lit. 'Jeremiah the Prophet') [yirmiyòhu hanóvi] ירמיהו הנביא

Esther (lit. 'Esther the Queen') [èster hamálkə] אסתר המלכה

המן הרשע [hōmən horóshə] Haman (lit. 'Haman the Evil Man')
 יהודה המכבי [yehùdā hamakábi] Judah the Maccabee

5.9 ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIERS

The major adjective quantifiers are א ביטל 'a little; slightly', נאנץ 'quite; rather; pretty' and זייער 'very'.

5.9.1 א ביטל

א ביטל 'a little; slightly' immediately precedes uninflected predicate adjectives. Before predicate adjectives with the indefinite article, it precedes the indefinite article. Cf 56.4.6 on partitive pronoun א ביטל.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIER א ביטל

The film is slightly boring דער פֿילם איז א ביטל נודנע

The film is a slightly boring one דער פֿילם איז א ביטל א נודנער

His films are slightly boring זײַנע פֿילמען זײַנען א ביטל נודנע

5.9.2 נאנץ

נאנץ 'quite; rather; pretty' immediately precedes attributive and predicate adjectives. It follows the indefinite article.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIER נאנץ

They're showing quite a boring film מ'הײַזט א נאנץ נודנעם פֿילם

The film is quite boring דער פֿילם איז נאנץ נודנע

The film is quite a boring one דער פֿילם איז א נאנץ נודנער

His films are quite boring זײַנע פֿילמען זײַנען נאנץ נודנע

5.9.3 זייער

זייער [zéyer / zeyr / zer] 'very' immediately precedes attributive and predicate adjectives. When זייער quantifies an attributive adjective with the indefinite article, it may precede or follow the indefinite article (א זייער - א זייער). When it quantifies a predicate adjective with the indefinite article, א זייער is generally used.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE QUANTIFIER זייער

I saw the very boring film איך האָב געזען דעם זייער נודנעם פֿילם

The film is very boring דער פֿילם איז זייער נודנע

His films are very boring זיינע פֿילמען זיינען זייער נודנע

מ'הייזט זייער א נודנעם פֿילם - מ'הייזט א זייער נודנעם פֿילם

They're showing a very boring film

The film is a very boring one דער פֿילם איז זייער א נודנער

5.10 COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

The comparative is formed by suffixing -ער to the adjective stem. Normal adjective endings are then suffixed to the -ער. Many comparatives have concomitant vowel changes, frequently וי/א/א → ע and ו → י, which must be learned with the relevant adjective. Note the special comparatives גוט 'good' → בעסער 'better', שלעכט 'bad' → ערגער 'worse'. There are four comparative link words corresponding with 'than' – conjunctions ווי and איידער which leave the compared noun phrase that follows them in nominative, and prepositions פֿאר and פֿון which place it in dative (→ §5.5.3).

SAMPLES OF COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

ניו-יאָרק איז גרעסער ווי אַ טון [asákh] אָנדרערע שטעט

New York is larger than many other cities

(cf. גרויס 'large')

די יינגערע שוועסטער איז קליינער פֿאַר דער עלטערער

The younger sister is cleverer than the older one

(cf. 'old' אַלט, 'clever' קלוג, 'young' יונג. cf.)

די טיערע פֿאַטאָגראַפֿיעס זינען שענער אידער די ביליקע

The expensive photographs are prettier than the cheap ones

(cf. 'pretty' שיין. cf.)

מ'קען האָבן מער צוטרוי צו אַ נײַערן אויטאָמאָביל

You can have more faith in a newer car

(cf. 'new' נײַ. cf.)

5.10.1 Comparative predicate adjectives

Comparative predicate adjectives are formed by using the definite article after *איז* 'is' or *זינען* 'are' (or another verb of being). They inflect as subject adjectives generally (→§5.5.1). Comparative affix -ער- appears between the comparative stem and the appropriate inflectional ending.

SAMPLES OF COMPARATIVE PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

The old table is the nicer one דער אַלטער טיש איז דער שענערער

The big city is the more beautiful one די גרויסע שטאָט איז די שענערע

The new house is the smaller one דאָס נײַע הויז איז דאָס קלענערע

5.10.2 Predicate base adjectives with comparative force

Repetition of the definite article with any predicate adjective tends to give

the adjective comparative force (in contrast to the indefinite article → §5.7.2). The pattern of inflection follows attributive adjectives (→ §5.5.1).

SAMPLES OF PREDICATE BASE ADJECTIVES WITH COMPARATIVE FORCE

The old table is the nice one דער אַלטער טיש איז דער שיינער

The big city is the beautiful one די גרויסע שטאָט איז די שיינע

The new house is the small one דאָס נייע הויז איז דאָס קליינע

5.11 SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

The superlative is formed by suffixing **סט**- to the adjective stem. The usual adjective endings are then suffixed to the **סט** sequence. Superlatives are generally processed by the same **א** / **אָ** / **וי** → **ע** and **ו** → **י** vowel changes as their corresponding comparatives. These vowel changes must be learned along with each of the adjectives affected. Note the special superlatives גוט 'good' → בעסט- 'best', שלעכט 'bad' → ערנסט- [erkst] 'worst'.

SAMPLES OF SUPERLATIVE ADJECTIVES

ניו-יאָרקער זאָגן נאָך אז דער „עמפּייער סטייט בילדינג“

איז דער העכסטער בנין אין דער העלט

New Yorkers still say that the Empire State Building is the tallest building in
the world

(cf. **הויך** 'tall; high')

דאָס איז די לענגסטע מעשה [léynkstə máysə] אין בוך

This is the longest story in the book

(cf. **לאַנג** 'long')

ער איז דער נאַרישסטער פֿון זיי אַלעמען

He is the most foolish of them all

(cf. נאַריש 'foolish')

זי איז אַזעק צו דער באַליבסטער מומע

She went to her most beloved aunt

(cf. באַליבט 'beloved')

5.11.1 Superlative predicate adjectives

Superlative predicate adjectives are formed by using the definite article after איז 'is' or זײַנען 'are'. They inflect as nominative adjectives generally (→ §5.5.1). The superlative affix -סט- appears between the comparative (/superlative) stem and the appropriate inflectional ending. They offer an alternative to attributive superlatives.

SAMPLES OF SUPERLATIVE PREDICATE ADJECTIVES

The old table is the nicest one דער אַלטער טיש איז דער שענסטער

The big city is the most beautiful one די גרויסע שטאָט איז די שענסטע

The new house is the smallest one דאָס נייע הויז איז דאָס קלענסטע

5.11.2 Superlative intensifier טאַמע

The superlative intensifier טאַמע [sáma] 'very (-st)', immediately precedes the superlative. טאַמע does not inflect.

SAMPLES OF SUPERLATIVE INTENSIFIER טאַמע

This is your (familiar) very best idea דאָס איז דיין טאַמע בעסטער איינפֿאַל

You have the most beautiful pictures דו האָסט די טאַמע שענסטע בילדער

They are the very greatest fools זיי זײַנען די טאַמע גרעסטע נאַרמאַנים

5.12 SPECIAL TYPES OF ADJECTIVES

5.12.1 Invariant adjectives

Adjectives formed by suffixization of **לר-** to the names of cities and towns (and occasionally countries) do not inflect. They retain the **לר-** ending in all cases, numbers and genders. Internal modifications of the stem are encountered in the names of some culturally central cities. In addition to their adjectival use, they all double as agentives denoting a person from the named place. As agentives they attract the feminizing suffix **יך** (→ §§ 3.2.3, 4.1.2.3).

SAMPLES OF INVARIANT ADJECTIVES

American **אמעריקאנער**

of / from Oxford **אָקספֿארדער**

of / from Warsaw **וואַרשעווער** (cf. Warsaw **וואַרשע**)

of / from Vilna **ווילנער**

of / from Jerusalem [yerusholáymer]

(cf. Jerusalem [yerusholáyim] **ירושלים**)

of / from Montreal **מאָנטרעאַלער**

of / from Melbourne **מעלבאָרנער**

of / from New York **ניו־יאָרקער**

Parisian **פאַריזער**

of / from Cracow **קראָקעווער** (cf. Cracow **קראָקע**)

of / from Tel Aviv [telavíver]

5.12.2 Adjectives from names of substances

Adjectives derived from names of traditionally known substances frequently attract suffix **לר-**, to which the appropriate adjective endings are further

suffixed. Note that נָאֵלֶד 'gold' attracts נ- alone, hence -נָאֵלֶד־ (→ §5.12.3).

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVES FROM NAMES OF SUBSTANCES WITH SUFFIX עֵרֶנ-

(of) iron -אִיזֶעֶרֶנ־ (cf. אִיזֶן 'iron')

(of) glass -גִּלְעִזֶעֶרֶנ־ (cf. גִּלְאָז 'glass')

wooden -הִילְצֶעֶרֶנ־ (cf. הָאֵלֶץ 'wood')

(of) copper -קֹופֶעֶרֶנ־ (cf. קֹופֶער 'copper')

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF ADJECTIVES DERIVED FROM NAMES OF SUBSTANCES

I have two wooden boxes אֵיךְ הָאָב צוּי הִילְצֶעֶרֶנֶ קֶעסֶטלֶעךְ

Don't break the glass table צעברעך נישט דעם גִּלְעִזֶעֶרֶנֶם טיש

5.12.3 ADJECTIVES WITH FINAL SYLLABIC ךְ-

Adjectives with a base form ending in syllabic ךְ- (→ §2.2.9) replace the syllabic ךְ- with נַע- in inflected forms (other than predicate indefinite with ending ם- → §5.7.2), e.g. base form אָפֶן [ofn] 'open' vs. masculine singular accusative/dative אָפֶענעם [óʔənəm], plural אָפֶענע [óʔənə]; base form גִּלְדֶן [goldn] 'golden' vs. masculine singular accusative/dative גִּלְדֶענעם [góldənəm], plural גִּלְדֶענע [góldənə].

5.13 DIMINUTIVES OF ADJECTIVES

There are two suffixes by which adjectives are diminutivized. One of these, -לֶעךְ, reduces the force of the adjective, and has a number of nuances. The second, -יֶנְק, applies affection and sentimentality. Unlike diminutives of nouns (→ §4.3), diminutives of adjectives do not undergo internal vowel shifts.

5.13.1 Adjective diminutive in לעך-

The adjective diminutive in לעך- mitigates the force of the base adjective, and is often used to soften a stark statement or mitigate an insult. It derives from the adverb diminutive in לעך- (→ §10.5). לעך- usually occurs with monosyllabic adjective stems. The diminutivized adjective is pronounced slowly in falsetto. It is often accompanied by a gentle forward and downward thrust of the head and the opened palm of one hand, with optional horizontal vibration of the same hand and its fingers, and a slight smile. Cf. §10.5 on diminutives of adverbs.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE DIMINUTIVE לעך-

- rather difficult; delicate שווערלעך (from שווער 'difficult')
 somewhat chilly; not very cold קאלטלעך (from קאלט 'cold')
 somewhat hot הייסלעך (from הייס 'hot')
 somewhat ugly [mísləkh] מיאוסלעך (from מיאוס [mías] 'ugly')

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF ADJECTIVE DIMINUTIVE לעך-

- It's a rather delicate matter ס'איז א שווערלעכער ענין
 It's a somewhat chilly day ס'איז א קאלטלעכער טאג
 It's a somewhat hot day ס'איז א הייסלעכער טאג
 Her boyfriend is not exactly handsome איר חבֿר [חבֿר] איז מיאוסלעך

5.13.2 Adjective diminutive in ינק-

The adjective diminutive ינק-, to which normal adjective endings are suffixed, marks warmth, affection and sentimentality. Its usage parallels the second diminutive of nouns in עלע- (→ §4.3.5). The adjective אַלט 'old', which is often personified to refer informally and affectionately to an elderly person, takes יטש-, e.g. דער אַלטיטשקער קוּחט 'The old chap is coming'.

SAMPLES OF ADJECTIVE DIMINUTIVES IN ינק-

white חײטניק (from חײט 'white')

little קלייניק (from קליין 'little')

beautiful שייניק (from שײן 'beautiful')

5.14 NOUNS THAT INFLECT FOR CASE

A minority of nouns, nearly all of them referring to people, may inflect for one or both of the objective cases. They attract inflectional ending ךְ- (ען- following ה, ו, a stressed vowel or diphthong, or the sequences נק, נג or consonant plus ךְ). They fall into two categories: intimate nouns and proper names. Personal pronouns inflect internally rather than by suffixation (→ §§6.1.2 – 6.1.3).

5.14.1 Intimate nouns

The intimate nouns are from family and traditional life.

5.14.1.1 Masculine intimate nouns

Masculine intimate nouns are inflected in both accusative and dative. Note that inflection for ךְ and מענטש is optional.

טאטע 'father' → טאטן

זיידע 'grandfather' → זיידן

ייד 'Jew; fellow; guy' (→ יידן)

מענטש 'person; fellow; human' (→ מענטשן)

רבי [rébɪ] '(traditional) school teacher; Chassidic rebbe' → רבי׳ן [rébm]

SAMPLES OF INFLECTED MASCULINE INTIMATE NOUNS

- Lloyd George knows my father לויד דזשאָרדזש קען דעם טאַטן
 I'm speaking with grandfather איך רעד מיטן זיידן
 Did you see that fellow? האָסט נעזען דעם מענטשן?
 Have you been to see the rebbe? ביסט געווען ביים רבין? [bam rébm]

5.14.1.2 Feminine intimate nouns

Feminine intimate nouns are inflected in dative. They optionally inflect in accusative. Inflection of מומע is optional even in dative.

- מאַמע 'mother' → מאַמען
 באַבע 'grandmother' → באַבען [bobm]
 מומע 'aunt' (→ מומען)

SAMPLES OF INFLECTED FEMININE INTIMATE NOUNS

- Are you going to (see) mother? גייסט צו דער מאַמען?
 Have you heard from grandmother? האָסט געהערט פֿון דער באַבען?
 I'm writing to my aunt איך שרייב דער מומען

5.14.1.3 Neutral intimate האַרץ

The one surviving neutral inflecting noun is האַרץ 'heart' which inflects to האַרצן in dative. Inflection signals that האַרץ is being used in its metaphoric sense, e.g. זיך נעמען צום האַרצן 'take to heart', אין האַרצן 'at heart', שווער אויפֿן [אין] האַרצן 'depressed' (lit. 'heavy on the heart'), אַ שטאָך אין האַרצן 'devastating shock; blow to the ego' (lit. 'stab in the heart'). The absence of inflection in dative signals that 'heart' is being used in a more strictly physical sense, e.g. דער פּאַציענט ליידט פֿון הייטיק אין האַרץ 'The patient is suffering heart pain'.

5.14.2 Proper names

A single proper name, whether forename or surname, may inflect for either objective case. Where both names are used, only the surname inflects. משיח [məsh(əkh) 'Messiah' is a proper name in Yiddish and therefore inflects to משיחן [məsh(əkhn). Analogously, biblical names comprising name plus descriptive title (→ §5.8.1) are treated as single names and it is therefore the descriptive title that inflects, e.g. אליהו הנביא [eylɔhu hanóvi] 'Elijah the Prophet' → אליהו הנביאן [eylɔhu hanóvin]. Cf. §§4.4.4, 5.15.1.2 on traditional Yiddish names.

SAMPLES OF INFLECTIONS OF PROPER NAMES

בערל Béri (m.) → בערלען [bérlən]

טיבעלע Táybale (f.) → טיבעלען [táybalən]

לֵאָה Léya (f.) → לאָהן [léyən]

קלמן Kálmán (m.) → קלמאַנען [kálmənən]

מוסקאָוויטש Móskevitsh → מוסקאָוויטשן [móskovitshn]

שלמה רובין Shlýmə Rúbin → שלמה רובינען [shlýmə rúbínən]

5.14.2.1 Optionality scale

The degree of optionality in the inflection of proper names depends in large measure upon the familiarity of the name in the language. Traditional names are most frequently inflected, well known modern names often inflected, and strange sounding foreign names (in the subjective view of the speaker or writer) only rarely inflected. Inflection is consciously avoided where confusion could result as to whether the name itself does or does not end in [n]. Thus the Japanese name Tokiko might at first not be inflected (to ensure that the hearer or reader does not mistakenly infer that the name is 'Tokikon'), but upon increasing acquaintance with the name, the rate of inflection could increase proportionately. Use of inflection with names not

rooted in the language is encountered in formal styles as a 'supergrammatical' feature, and in the opinion of some, a pedantic one. In informal styles, inflection of non-traditional names may be used for humorous effect.

SAMPLES OF INFLECTIONS OF NON-TRADITIONAL PROPER NAMES

טשאַק בערין 'Chuck Berry' → טשאַק בערי
 לויד דזשאָרדזש 'Lloyd George' → לויד דזשאָרדזש
 נאַדינע 'Nadine' → נאַדינע
 ניקסאָנע 'Nixon' → ניקסאָנע

5.15 POSSESSIVES

Possession by humans is marked by suffixization of the possessive ending -'s. Possession by nonhumans (institutions, abstract notions, etc.) is generally expressed by the preposition פֿון.

5.15.1 Human possessors

Possession by humans is marked by suffixization of 's- (usually pronounced between [s] and [z]), to the possessor's name (or an agentive noun) e.g. מענדעלעס סטיל 'Mendele's style'. If the possessor has a definite article, the article is inflected for dative (→ 55.1.3), e.g. דעם פֿייערלעשערס טאָכטער 'the fireman's daughter', דער לערער'ס צימער 'the teacher's (f.) room', דעם קינדס צאָצקע 'the child's toy'. The understood preposition is פֿון, denoting relation to the possessor. If the name or agentive ends in one of the sibilants ז, ס, צ, ש, the suffix is -'ס, e.g. האָראָוויצעס היטל 'Horowitz's hat', דעם באַלעבאָסעס אַדרעס 'the boss's address'. The older usage of an

apostrophe before possessive ך is still encountered.

5.15.1.1 Intimate nouns as human possessors

Possessives of the masculine intimate nouns טאטע, זיידע, ייד, מענטש and רבי (→ §5.14.1.1) are formed by adding possessive ך to the inflected ן- form of each (טאטן, זיידן, יידן, מענטשן and רבין). The resulting possessives are דעם טאטנס, דעם זיידנס, דעם יידנס, דעם מענטשנס and דעם רבינס [rébnz].

5.15.1.2 Possessives as proper names

In traditional Yiddish-speaking communities, people are often known by their forenames followed by the possessive of one of their parents' forenames. Alternatively, the possessive of the agentive of a parent's profession may be used. The construction, which has the force of 'son of' and 'daughter of', is well represented in Yiddish literature, both as pen names of authors and in names of major works. Cf. §§4.4.4, 5.8.1, 5.14.2 on traditional names.

SAMPLES OF POSSESSIVES FORMING PROPER NAMES

יצחק באַשעוויס (בַּת־שֶׁבַעס)

Yítshkhok Bashévis 'Isaac son of Bath-Sheba'

(Isaac Bashevis Singer)

מאָטל פֿײַז דעם חזן

Motl Péysə-dəm-kházns ('Motl son of the Cantor Peysa')

(name of book by Sholem Aleichem)

שלמה ר' חיים

Shloyme Reb Kháyims ('Solomon son of Chaim')

(name of book by Méndelə Móykhər Sfórim)

5.15.2 Nonhuman possessors

Possession by nonhumans is generally marked by explicit use of the preposition פֿון 'of', e.g. דער גרינדער פֿון דער אָרגאַניזאַציע 'the founder of the organization', דער כאַראַקטער פֿון שטאָט 'the city's character'.

6 PRONOUNS

6.0 OVERVIEW

There are four types of pronouns – personal, possessive, demonstrative and partitive.

6.1 PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Personal pronouns replace a specifically named or understood person or thing. There are seven singular and three plural personal pronouns. Most pronouns inflect for accusative and for dative. For samples of the use of personal pronouns → §§ 7.5.1–7.5.2, 7.6.1.1–7.6.1.2, 7.7.1–7.7.2, 7.9.1–7.9.2.

6.1.1 Pronouns in nominative

6.1.1.1 Singular

I	אִיךְ
you (familiar)	דו
you (formal)	איר
he	ער
she	זי
people; one; we	מ' \ מען \ מע
it	ס' \ עס \ סע

6.1.1.2 Plural

we מִיךְ

you אִיךְ

they זיי

6.1.2 Pronouns in accusative

6.1.2.1 Singular

me מִיךְ

you (familiar) דוּ

you (formal) אַיךְ

him [em] אים

her זי

it עס

6.1.2.2 Plural

us אונדז

you אַיךְ

them זיי

6.1.3 Pronouns in dative

עס \ אים \ זי 'it' do not occur in dative.

6.1.3.1 Singular

me מִיךְ

you (familiar) דוּ

you (formal) אַיך

him [em] אים

her איר

6.1.3.2 Plural

us אונדז

you אַיך

them זיי

6.1.4 Single objective case in dialectal usage

Minority usage, based upon Northeastern Yiddish, uses the dative forms for both accusative and dative of the singular personal pronouns. Bearing in mind that the plural paradigms are universally identical for both accusative and dative, this usage results in a single objective case for all personal pronouns. Use of the unified objective case, as follows, may be encountered in the literary language.

me מיר

you (familiar) דיר

you (formal) אַיך

him [em] אים

her איר

6.1.5 Morphology of the third person indefinite pronoun

The third person human indefinite may occur in any of three forms before the verb — 'ה (most frequent in Yiddish literature and in contemporary written Yiddish) מען [mə] (most frequent in journalistic style) or ער [ər]

(the favourite of speakers and writers hailing from Southeastern Yiddish speech territory). After the verb, only *הען* occurs. The same pattern is also followed by the third person nonhuman indefinite. It may occur in any of three forms before the verb — 'ט, *עס* [əs] or *זע* [sə], with usage distribution paralleling that of 'ה, *הען* and *זע*, respectively. After the verb, only *עס* occurs.

6.1.6 Semantic features of personal pronouns

6.1.6.1 *דו* (דיך / דייר) and *איך* (אייך)

The second person singular *דו* forms are traditionally used with intimate friends and small children. The technically 'plural' *איך* (cf. French *vous*, German *Sie*) is used as a singular with persons with whom one has a more formal relationship. In Eastern Europe, a child would often address his or her own grandparent with *איך*; a girl and boy in love would be taking a daring step by switching to *דו* before marriage. The division between *דו* and *איך* continues to depend on a number of social variables. Nevertheless, it is clear that except in the most traditional communities, *דו* has steadily encroached upon the semantic territory of *איך* in the course of the last century. This is most marked in the English-speaking world and in Israel, where the coteritorial English and Hebrew lack the distinction, but the trend is evident among younger speakers even in Paris and Montreal, where the distinction is supported by the coteritorial French. The major factor in the degree to which *דו* and *איך* are distinguished by younger people today seems to be the level of 'traditionalness' of a speech community or circle. Among younger Yiddish speakers born and raised in the West, it has become customary in recent years to ask permission upon first acquaintance to dispense with *איך*

and to proceed straight onward to 17. It is, however, important to use אײַר with adult members of traditional communities as well as with older generation East-European-born speakers of all cultural persuasions.

6.1.6.2 Use of 'ח

'ח (/ חען / חע) is widely used in Yiddish where English uses 'we', 'people (in general)', 'one', 'you'. It frequently occurs where English uses a passive.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF 'ח

We've already been there ח'איז שוין געווען דאָרטן

People say so ח'זאָגט אזוי

What do people say about it? וואָס זאָגט [vozzókt] מען חען דעם?

One can't say for certain [avzíkhər] ח'קען נישט זאָגן אויף זיכער

The truth is not known דעם אמת [émes] חייט חען נישט

You're not allowed in there ח'טאָר נישט אַרײַנגיין דאָרטן

6.1.6.3 Use of 'ס

'ס (/ עס / עס) may serve to provide a grammatically necessary subject in a sentence with no 'real' subject. It may also occur where Yiddish requires a subject at the beginning of a phrase to meet the inflected-verb-second rule (→ §14.1). It prefixes the predicatives איז דאָ 'there is' and זײַנען דאָ 'there are' (→ §14.6).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF 'ס

It could be / Maybe ס'קען זײַן

Maybe not ס'קען זײַן אַז נישט

It's raining in London ס'גייט [zgeyt] אַ רעגן אין לאָנדאָן

Father is coming ס'קומט דער טאָטע

An apple tree is growing in the garden ס'וואַקסט אַן עמלבוים אין גאָרטן

It's fine / Things are good ס'איז גוט [sigút]

6.2 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns occur both before and after the noun. Where possession is clear from context, the definite article is generally used instead of a possessive pronoun (→ §15.13).

6.2.1 Preceding the possessed noun

Possessive pronouns preceding the possessed noun inflect for the number of the possessor and the number of the possession. The gender of the possessor is evident only in the third person singular where there are separate pronouns – זֵין 'his' vs. אִיד 'her'. Possessive pronouns preceding the possessed noun also inflect for gender when the indefinite article is used in a special construction (→ §6.2.1.5).

6.2.1.1 Singular possessor with singular possession

my	זײַן
your (familiar)	דײַן
your (formal)	אײַער
his	זײַן
her	אײַר

6.2.1.2 Singular possessor with plural possessions

my	זײַנע
your (familiar)	דײַנע
your (formal)	אײַערע
his	זײַנע
her	אײַדע

6.2.1.3 Plural possessors with singular possession

our אונדזער

your אייער

their זייער

6.2.1.4 Plural possessors with plural possessions

our אונדזערע

your אייערע

their זייערע

6.2.1.5 The possessive-indefinite construction

Possessive pronouns preceding the possessed noun inflect for gender and case when the indefinite article occurs with the noun. The construction has the force of 'a — of mine/yours etc.'. It is most frequent with nouns designating humans.

SAMPLES OF USE OF THE POSSESSIVE-INDEFINITE CONSTRUCTION

מינער א פֿעטער קומט הינט

An uncle of mine is coming today

מינע א מוחע קומט אויף דער נאַכט

An aunt of mine is coming this evening

איך זע אונדזערן א באַקאַנטן

I see an acquaintance (m.) of ours

6.2.2 Following the possessed noun

Possessive pronouns following the possessed noun may be synonymous with

the simpler forms preceding the noun. Used with the definite article, the construction may have demonstrative force (→ §6.3). Possessive pronouns following the noun inflect for everything – number of the possessor and the possession, gender of the possessor and the possession, and case. The arrow (→) marks the regular changes for both accusative and dative (AD) or, where applicable, for dative (D) only. Sample nouns are שירעם (דער) 'umbrella', זאך (די) 'thing' and הויז (דאָס) 'house'.

6.2.2.1 First person possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם מינעם (AD) → דער שירעם מינער

דער זאך מינער (D) → בי זאך מינע

דעם הויז מינעם (D) → דאָס הויז מינס

6.2.2.2 Familiar second person possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם דינעם (AD) → דער שירעם דינער

דער זאך דינער (D) → בי זאך דינע

דעם הויז דינעם (D) → דאָס הויז דינס

6.2.2.3 Formal second person possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם אינערן (AD) → דער שירעם אינערע

דער זאך אינערע (D) → בי זאך אינערע

דעם הויז אינערן (D) → דאָס הויז אינערס

6.2.2.4 Third person masculine possessor with single possession

דעם שירעם זינעם (AD) → דער שירעם זינער

דער זאך זינער (D) → די זאך זינע
דעם הויז זינעם (D) → דאָס הויז זינס

6.2.2.5 Third person feminine possessor with single possession

דעם שידעם אידן (AD) → דער שירעם אירער
דער זאך אירער (D) → די זאך אידע
דעם הויז אידן (D) → דאָס הויז אירס

6.2.2.6 Singular possessor with plural possessions

די שידעמס \ זאַלן \ היזער מינע
די שידעמס \ זאַלן \ היזער דינע
די שירעמס \ זאַלן \ היזער אמערע
די שידעמס \ זאַלן \ היזער זינע
די שידעמס \ זאַלן \ היזער אירע

6.2.2.7 First person possessors with single possession

דעם שידעם אונדזערן (AD) → דער שירעם אונדזערע
דער זאך אונדזערע (D) → די זאך אונדזערע
דעם הויז אונדזערן (D) → דאָס הויז אונדזערס

6.2.2.8 Second person possessors with single possession

דעם שידעם איערן (AD) → דער שידעם איערע
דער זאך איערע (D) → די זאך איערע
דעם הויז איערן (D) → דאָס הויז איערס

6.2.2.9 Third person possessors with singular possession

דעם שידעם זייערן (AD) → דער שידעם זייערע

בעב זאך זייערעב (ד) → בי זאך זייערע
 דעם הויז זייערן (ד) → באס הויז זייערס

6.2.2.10 Possessors with plural possessions

בי שידעמס \ זאכֿן \ היזער אונדזערע
 די שידעמס \ זאכֿן \ היזער אייערע
 די שידעמס \ זאכֿן \ היזער זייערע

6.3 DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

6.3.1 'this'

Demonstrative 'this' may be expressed by phonetic stress alone, in which case it is implicit in written texts, or explicitly by a demonstrative pronoun.

6.3.1.1 Implicit 'this': stressed definite article

The definite articles (in any of the cases) can double as demonstratives by being stressed. In written texts, demonstrative use of an article is inferred from the context or evident from bold typeface (or spacing out of letters to denote emphasis). Noun phrases used as demonstratives are frequently jumped to the front of a sentence, further strengthening the sense of 'this'/'these' rather than 'the' (→ §§14.4.7, 14.10).

SAMPLES OF IMPLICIT 'THIS'

דעם בחור קען איך

[dém bókhər kénakh] I know this fellow

cf. [dəm bókhər kénakh] I know the fellow

די מיידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען

[dí méydl i(z) do fríer gavén] This girl was here before

cf. [dəméydl i(z) do fríer gavén] The girl was here before

דאָס בוך איז לאַנג

[dóz búkh iz lánɡ] This book is long

cf. [dəz búkh iz lánɡ] The book is long

די גאַסן זײַנען שטאַל

[dí gásn zaynen shmól] These streets are narrow

cf. [də gásn zaynen shmól] The streets are narrow

6.3.1.2 Explicit 'this'

There are several demonstrative formulas: אַז and אַזאַ preceding the definite article; אַז alone following it; adjectively inflected דאָזיק- following it. Two or more may be used redundantly in combination for proportionately increasing emphasis. A series of demonstratives for a single noun serves to emphasize identity and is occasionally used for humorous or hostile effect. In the samples provided, demonstrative force may be said to increase with each line.

SAMPLES OF EXPLICIT 'THIS'

(→ §6.3.1.1 FOR TRANSLATIONS)

אַז דעם בחור קען איך

אַז אַ דעם בחור קען איך

דעם אַ בחור קען איך

דעם דאָזיקן בחור קען איך

אַז דעם דאָזיקן בחור קען איך

אַז אַ דעם דאָזיקן בחור קען איך

אָט די מידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 אָט אַ די מידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 די אַ מידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 די דאָזיקע מידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 אָט די דאָזיקע מידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען
 אָט אַ די דאָזיקע מידל איז דאָ פֿריער געווען

אָט דאָס בוך איז לאַנג
 אָט אַ דאָס בוך איז לאַנג
 דאָס דאָזיקע בוך איז לאַנג
 אָט דאָס דאָזיקע בוך איז לאַנג
 אָט אַ דאָס דאָזיקע בוך איז לאַנג

אָט די גאָסן זינען שמאָל
 אָט אַ די גאָסן זינען שמאָל
 די אַ גאָסן זינען שמאָל
 די דאָזיקע גאָסן זינען שמאָל
 אָט די דאָזיקע גאָסן זינען שמאָל
 אָט אַ די דאָזיקע גאָסן זינען שמאָל

6.3.2 'that'

Stressed definite articles are used in many instances where English has 'that', e.g. וואָס איז דאָס? [vós ə dós?] 'What's that?'. Where 'thatness' is however explicitly required, דער אנדערער, דער צווייטער or יענער are used.

6.3.2.1 דער צווייטער / דער אנדערער

As an attributive adjective before a noun, דער אנדערער 'the other / next one' may signify 'thatness' for any noun, but on its own, it substitutes for a

person – ‘that one; the other person; the second one; the next one’. As an adjective, **אַנדער** is anomalous insofar as it declines only with the definite article (e.g. **די אַנדערע פֿרוי** ‘the other woman’; **דער אַנדערער מאַן** ‘the other man’); with the indefinite article it is usually left as invariant, e.g. **אַן אַנדער פֿרוי** ‘an other woman’, **אַן אַנדער מאַן** ‘an other man’. Plural is always **אַנדערע**. In singular only, **דער צווייטער** (lit. ‘the second one’) may be used interchangeably with **דער אַנדערער**.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF **דער אַנדערער** AND **דער צווייטער**

דעם אַדנערן (ו דעם צווייטן) דאַרף מען פֿרעגן

We should ask the other man (/ that man)

דער אַנדערער (ו דער צווייטער) איז דער עקספּערט

It's the other one who's the expert

די אַנדערע (ו די צווייטע) קומט מאָרגן

The other lady is coming tomorrow

די אַנדערע קען איך נאָך נישט

I don't know the others yet

6.3.2.2 **יענער**

As an attributive adjective before a noun, **יענער** may signify ‘thatness’ for any noun, but on its own it substitutes for a person – ‘that one; the other person’. The old neutral nominative form in **-ט** (**יענט**, also spelled **יענץ**) is very rare nowadays. When used with a neutral it is increasingly lining up with feminine in nominative and with masculine in accusative and dative (cf. **יענער** → §14.7 and **וועלכער** → §11 3.1.1 and interrogative **וועלכער** → §11 3.1.1).

frequently (but not necessarily) aggressive or derogatory. When used with the definite article, דער יעניקער, usually aggressive and occasionally humorous, may be substituted for יענער. יענער demonstrates the speaker or writer's wish to project distance between him or herself and the person spoken of by labelling him or her with 'otherness'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF יענער

יענער חייט נישט וואָס ער רעדט

That man (lit. 'that one') doesn't know what he's talking about

יענע חייט נישט וואָס זי רעדט

That woman (lit. 'that one') doesn't know what she's talking about

יענעם קען מען נישט געטרויען

That man can't be trusted

דער יעניקער איז שוין חידער דאָ

There he is again!

6.3.2.3 דער זעלבער / דער זעלביקער

As an attributive adjective before a noun, זעלב(י)ק- may signify 'sameness' for any noun, but on its own it substitutes for a person – 'the same one; the same person'.

SAMPLE OF THE USE OF דער זעלביקער

דער זעלביקער האָט אַמאָל געהאַלטן אַנדערש

The same man once held a rather different view

6.4 PARTITIVE PRONOUNS

Partitive pronouns provide for a limitation to a single person or a conceptual proportional relation to a perceived group of people, or people in general.

6.4.1 איינע and איינער

איינער 'a/one (person); a man' and איינע 'a woman' inflect for case and gender as adjectives. Cf. §§12.1.1–12.1.1.1 on numerals אין and אינט.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF איינער AND איינע

One (m.) of them was here today איינער איז דאָ היינט געווען

One (f.) of them was here today איינע איז דאָ היינט געווען

You should invite one of them איינעם וואָלטסט געדאַרפֿט פֿאַרבעטן

One says one thing, one says another איינער זאָגט אַזוי, איינער זאָגט אַזוי

6.4.2 עמעצער

עמעצער 'somebody; anybody (positive)' is usually pronounced [éymətsər].

It inflects for case as an adjective. עמעצער is exclusively a pronoun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF עמעצער

Is anybody here? עמעצער איז דאָ? [éymətsər]

I saw somebody געזען [éymətsn] איך האָב עמעצן

6.4.3 קיינער

קיינער 'nobody; anybody (negative)' inflects for case as an adjective. Where the negative phrase does not already contain the negative particle נישט, קיינער נישט is used, e.g. ווער איז דאָ? 'Who's there?' is answered negatively by קיינער נישט 'Nobody'. קיינער is exclusively a pronoun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF קיינער

Don't tell anybody זאָלסט קיינעם נישט דערציילן

I didn't see anybody איך האָב קיינעם נישט געזען

Nobody's here? קיינער איז דאָ נישטאָ?

6.4.4 טייל

טייל 'some (people); part', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. טייל is also a common noun and an invariant adjective that may refer to inanimate objects.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF טייל

Some say 'yes', some say 'no' טייל זאָגן יאָ טייל זאָגן נאָין

Some will agree טייל וועלן מסכים [máskim] זיין

6.4.5 אַ מאָר / עטלעכע

עטלעכע, or אַ מאָר 'a few', which take a plural verb, do not inflect. עטלעכע and אַ מאָר are also common nouns and invariant adjectives that may refer to inanimate objects.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF עטלעכע AND אַ מאָר

I know only a few of them איך קען נאָר אַ מאָר פֿון זיי

A few people will come עטלעכע וועלן קומען

6.4.6 אַ ביטל

אַ ביטל 'a small number; a few', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. When used as a common noun or invariant adjective, אַ ביטל has the sense of 'a little'. Cf. 95.9.1 on adjective quantifier אַ ביטל.

א ביטל SAMPLES OF THE USE OF

A few people remained זינען נעבליבן א ביטל

A few people will be unhappy זיין אומצופרידן א ביטל וועלן

א טך 6.4.7

א טך [asákh] 'many', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. It is also a common noun and invariant adjective that may occur with inanimate objects.

א טך SAMPLES OF THE USE OF

Many people are still here זינען נאך דא א טך

Many have already left זינען שוין אַזעק א טך

די מערסטע 6.4.8

די מערסטע 'most', which takes a plural verb, does not inflect. It is also a common noun and invariant adjective that may refer to inanimate objects.

די מערסטע SAMPLES OF THE USE OF

Most people are still here זינען נאך דא די מערסטע

Most have already left זינען שוין אַזעק די מערסטע

איטלעכער / יעדערער / יעדער איינער 6.4.9

'everyone; everybody', which take a singular verb, inflect for case and gender as adjectives. איטלעכער now occurs mostly in literary styles. They are exclusively pronouns.

איטלעכער / יעדערער / יעדער איינער SAMPLES OF THE USE OF

Everyone knows he's crazy איז חסונע יעדער איינער ווייס אז ער

איך האָב געזען יעדן איינעם פֿון זיי I saw every one of them
 דאָס חיים יעדערער Everyone knows that
 איסלעכער איז צופֿרידן Everyone is happy
 יעדערער האָט זיינע משוגעטן [meshugásn] Everyone has his foibles

6.4.10 יעדער איינציקער

יעדער איינציקער 'each and every one; every single one', which takes a singular verb, inflects for case and gender as an adjective. It is exclusively a pronoun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF יעדער איינציקער

איך קען יעדן איינציקן I know every single one
 יעדער איינציקער וועט היינט קומען Every single person will come today
 מ'וועט פֿארבעטן יעדן איינציקן We will invite every single one of them

6.4.11 אַלע

אַלע 'everyone' which takes a plural verb, optionally inflects to אַלעמען in either objective case when serving as a pronoun referring to humans. When substituting for inanimate objects, אַלע is retained uninflected in all cases. Hence האָסט אַלע ביכער? 'Do you have all the books?' may be answered by איך האָב זיי אַלע 'I have them all'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF אַלע AND אַלעמען

אַלע קענען זיי מעשה? [máysə] Does everyone know the story?
 האָסט אַלעמען דערציילט די מעשה? You told everyone the story?

7 VERBS

7.0 OVERVIEW

The Yiddish verb system combines synthetic and analytic constructions. Synthetic verbs synthesize grammatical information into a single word by inflecting the verb as required. Only the present tense is fully synthetic in Yiddish. Person and number are marked by appropriate endings. The past and future are formed by combining a synthetic helping verb with an uninflected (unchanging) main verb. In the past, the unchanging main verb is the past participle. In the future it is the infinitive. The essential morphology therefore comprises the suffixes of the stem in the present tense and the conjugations of the helping verbs used to form the past and future. Analytic verbs are discussed in §9.

7.1 THE INFINITIVE

The infinitive is the traditional point of reference for any verbal paradigm. The synthetic infinitive is formed by suffixing ך (or ן after ה; ג; נ; ק; a stressed vowel or diphthong; ל following a consonant) to the stem. Preposition ל 'to', unlike its English counterpart, appears only rarely with the infinitive.

SAMPLES OF INFINITIVES

develop אָנטװיקלען

say זאָגן

dance טאַנצן

laugh לאַכן

look קוק

yell שרייען

7.2 THE PRESENT PARTICIPLE

The present participle is formed by suffixization of *-נדִיק* (or *-ענדִיק* after *נ*, *מ*, *נ*, *נג*, *נק*, *ל* following a consonant, or a stressed vowel) to the stem of the verb. It denotes the ongoingness of the verbal action – ‘while doing / being something; in the course of; during’. Its use frequently corresponds with English *-ing* when so used. Syntactically, *-נדִיק* functions as an adverb (→ §14.4.1).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF PRESENT PARTICIPLES

איך בין אַריין אין צימער האַלטנדיק די ביכער אין האַנט

I entered the room, holding the books in my hand

זיצנדיק אין שענק האָבן מיר געכאַפט אַ שיינע מאָר לחיים [ləkháyimz]

Sitting in the pub, we had quite a few drinks

זי איז אַזעק טראַכטנדיק זענען דעם

She left thinking about it

שמועסנדיק אַ גאַנצע נאַכט האָט מען געפֿונען דעם ענטפֿער

Talking a whole night, the answer was found

שרייענדיק זעסטו קיין זאַך נישט אויפֿטאַן [úrton]

You won't accomplish anything by yelling

7.3 THE VERBAL ADDITIVE: זיך

The verbal additive is זיך. It is only pronounced [zikh] when stressed for contrast. It is normally reduced to [zakh] or [zakh] and although written separately, it is nearly always pronounced as a suffix of the preceding verb. When the part of the verb preceding זיך ends in one of the voiceless consonants [f], [k], [kh], [p], [s], [sh], [t], [ts] – most frequently [t] of the third person singular ending – that voiceless consonant may undergo the usual regressive voiceless assimilation and become voiced in deference to the [z] of זיך (→ §2.2.3), e.g. זיך וואס הערט [vos hértzakh?] ‘What’s new?; How are you?’. זיך following a verb ending in a voiceless consonant is, however, one of the instances where assimilation may be progressive, leading to the devoicing of the second consonant – the ר of זיך – hence the equally widespread [vos hértzakh?]. זיך follows the present tense verb but usually precedes the past participle in the past tense and the infinitive in the future tense (→ §§7.5, 7.6, 7.9, 14.3.1, 14.3.3.1, 14.5.1, 14.5.3.1).

7.3.1 זיך as an inherent part of the verb

Some verbs are historically accompanied by זיך (literally ‘oneself; itself’). In these instances, זיך always occurs with the verb, and is listed with it in dictionaries. Many inherent זיך verbs have different meanings when used on their own, e.g. בעטן ‘ask’ vs. זיך בעטן ‘beg’.

SAMPLES OF VERBS WITH INHERENT זיך

זיך ארויסדרייען [aróyzdreyən] extricate oneself; get out of

זיך אריינמישן interfere; mix in

זיך באמיען צו

זיך באקלאגן complain

זיך חבֿרן [hávern] (מיט) be friends (with)

make noise זיך טומלען

try זיך טשאַרען

become tied up / entangled זיך פֿאַרשלאָנגען

hesitate; be indecisive זיך קווענקלען

7.3.2 זיך as intransitivity and reflexivity marker

זיך may designate intransitivity or a reflexive mood in a verb that is transitive when it appears alone (not to be confused with the grammatical reflexive → §14.8). זיך adds the notion that it is the subject him or herself that is undergoing the action.

SAMPLES OF זיך AS AN INTRANSITIVITY AND REFLEXIVITY MARKER

dress up elegantly זיך אויסטוען (cf. פּוּצן 'polish' trans. v.)

hide (oneself) זיך באַהאַלטן (cf. באַהאַלטן 'hide' trans. v.)

get washed זיך וואַשן (cf. וואַשן 'wash' trans. v.)

wish for oneself זיך ווינטשן (cf. ווינטשן 'wish' trans. v.)

comfort / console oneself זיך טריסטן (cf. טריסטן 'console' trans. v.)

forgive oneself זיך פֿאַרגעבן (cf. פֿאַרגעבן 'forgive' trans. v.)

7.3.2.1 לערנען זיך and לערנען

לערנען (→ §5.1.3.2) may mean both 'teach' and 'study'. Where the meaning is unclear from context, זיך לערנען may be used for 'study' to avoid ambiguity. זיך לערנען occurs much more frequently in discussions of modern education. In discussion of traditional studies, לערנען appears on its own, e.g. לערנען חומש [khúmesh] 'study Khúmesh [the Five Books of Moses]', לערנען אַ בלאַט גמרא [gamóra] 'master a section of the Talmud (lit. learn a leaf (= two sided page) of Talmud)'. Cf. §§ 4.3.2.2, 5.1.3.2, 15.17.15.

7.3.3 זײַ as a solitude marker

זײַ may be attached at will to a number of verbs to denote solitude, the state of being on one's own, or wishing to be alone, e.g. זײַ אײַך נאָ 'I am going; walking' vs. ...זײַך נאָ אײַך 'I am walking along by myself...'. It may have the force of 'minding one's own business' and is commonly used to anticipate an interruption or harassment from another party.

7.3.4 Prepositional constructions with זײַ

זײַ combines with a number of prepositions to form widely used prepositional phrases. Occasionally, the construction is used creatively. The best known example comes from the literary movement associated with the introspectivist Yiddish literary journal זײַן אײַן זײַך, launched in New York in 1920. Its name derives from זײַן אײַן זײַך 'in oneself', hence – introspectivist. The group's adherents are known as the אינזיכניסטן *inzikhists* / introspectivists'.

SAMPLES OF PREPOSITIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS WITH זײַ

around oneself; in one's circle / environment זײַן אַרומ [arúm]

at home; in one's own possession; זײַ בײַ [ba]

with oneself זײַ מיט

independently; alone זײַ אַרזאַך [árzakh]

recover; get well זײַ קומען צו

7.3.5 Inflection of זײַ for person in dialectal usage

In Southern Eastern Yiddish (comprising Mideastern and Southeastern Yiddish), verbal additive זײַ is generally reserved for the third person only and for the general sense of 'oneself'. The first person singular is מײַך and the

second person singular דיך. Less consistently encountered are אונדז for first person plural and איר for second person plural. Cf. e.g. איך וואש מיך 'I'm washing myself' for standard איך וואש זיך. Use of inflected forms of דיך may be encountered in the literary language.

7.4. NEGATION

The negator is נישט (N.E.) or נישט (S.). It is קיין נישט [nit kin / nit ka] with an indefinite noun as object. נישט is only stressed when emphasis is required. On its position in the sentence → §§14.3.3, 14.5.3.

7.5. PRESENT TENSE

The present tense is formed by suffixation of the appropriate ending to the stem. There is no ending in the first person singular. Note that the formal second person singular איר form is taken from the plural. דיך follows the present tense verb. The first person singular is identical with the stem of the verb. The first person plural is usually identical with the infinitive (but cf. §§7.5.3, 14.9).

7.5.1 Present singular endings

first person:	no ending
second person familiar:	סט-
second person formal:	ט-
third person:	ט-

imperative familiar: no ending

imperative formal: ט-

SAMPLE OF PRESENT SINGULAR: זאגן 'say'

I say איך זאג

you (familiar) say דו זאגסט

you (formal) say איר זאגט

he says ער זאגט

she says זי זאגט

it is said / people say / one says מ'זאגט

say! tell me! (familiar) זאג

say! tell me! (formal) זאגט

7.5.2 Present plural endings

first person: (ען)-

second person: ט-

third person: (ען)-

imperative: ט-

SAMPLE OF PRESENT PLURAL: זאגן 'say'

we say מיר זאגן

you say איר זאגט

they say זיי זאגן

say! tell me! זאגט

SAMPLE VERBS WITH REGULAR PRESENT

visit באזוכן

bless (esp. 'say the traditional grace after meals') בענטשן

yearn for; miss בענקען

remember נעדענקען

live (- dwell) האוינען

dream [khólemən] חלומען

~~דאס~~ טאנצן

think טראכטן

run לויפן

read [léyənən] לייענען

think (- be of the opinion) מיינען

eat עסן

go (by vehicle) פאָרן

~~קומען~~ קומען

sleep שלאָפן

~~שוועטן~~ שוועטן

7.5.3 Reduced װ in verb endings

There are a few verbs with first and third person plural ending ען- that have infinitives in ן-. The ען- forms are expected with stems ending in a stressed vowel or diphthong (→ §2.2.9). Cf. ען זיי גיין [géyən] 'we / they are going', ען זיי זעהן [zéən] 'we / they see', ען זיי שטיין [shtéyən] 'we / they are standing' vs. infinitives גיין 'go', זעהן 'see', שטיין 'stand'. Note that the װ that appears in verb endings in the expected phonetic contexts should not be confused with the organic װ of stems that happen to end in װ. Where a stem ends in װ, the װ is retained throughout the conjugation, e.g. stem נאָרעט 'snore', infinitive נאָרעטען, third person נאָרעטען ער זי 'he/she is snoring'.

7.5.4 Variants in the regular present tense

7.5.4.1 Stem ending in ט in third person singular

Stems ending in ט, conjugated for third person singular (where the present tense ending is also ט), would result in two consecutive t's. Double consonants do not generally occur (although they appear in writing in compounded words to preserve the integrity of both stems, e.g. **מְאַרְדּוּמֵן** 'call together' from prefix **מְאַר-** and infinitive **רומן** → §6.1.5). The potential טט sequence that would result in the third person singular of stems ending in ט is averted by obligatory collapse in both speech and writing to a single ט, e.g. **זי אַרבעט** 'she works' (infinitive **אַרבעטן**), **ער האַלט** 'he holds / is holding' (infinitive **האַלטן**), **ח'חצרט** 'people are waiting; everybody is waiting' (infinitive **חצרטן**).

7.5.4.2 Stem ending in ד in third person singular

Stems ending in ד in third person singular (where the present tense ending is ט), would result in ד followed by ט. The דט sequence is retained in writing, but never pronounced, hence **זי רעדט** [zi ret] 'she talks / is talking'.

7.5.5 Anomalies

7.5.5.1 No ending in third person singular

The third person singular forms of a number of helping verbs that serve to form analytic verbs (→ §9.1) do not have the usual ט- ending.

דאַרף 'has to; must' (→ §9.1.2)

ויל 'wants' (→ §9.1.6)

זאָל 'should' (→ §9.1.8)

חור 'must' (→ §9.1.12)

מענ 'may' (→ §9.1.13)

(ניט) ס'קען 'may not' (→ §9.1.13)

קען 'can; is able' (→ §9.1.16)

7.5.5.2 Optional ו ending in third person singular

The irregular וויסן 'know (something that is not generally studied)' (→ §15.4) may or may not have the usual ו- ending in third person singular, hence זי וויסט = זי וויסטו 'she knows'.

7.5.6 Imperative additives טא and זעה

טא [ta; to] immediately precedes the imperative and זעה [zhe] immediately follows it. They can be used independently of each other or they may surround the imperative for increased effect. Both טא and זעה invoke affection, love or familiarity to support a suggestion, request or command, often having the force of 'please', 'do please' or 'come on'. טא occasionally translates 'then; in that case' in support of the imperative, and usually occurs after the other party has made some remark about the request. Both טא and זעה frequently serve to impose guilt upon the listener or reader in support of the request made (→ §11.4 on interrogative additives וואס and וואס). In less intimate contexts, the non-emotional זיט אדער נישט (familiar) or זיט אדער נישט (lit. 'Be so good'), may be used for 'please'.

SAMPLES OF IMPERATIVE ADDITIVES טא and זעה

Then tell me מיר זאג טא

Come on, please tell me מיר זעה זאג

Then come on, please tell me (You owe it to me!) מיר זעה זאג

7.6 PAST TENSE

7.6.1 Regular past

The regular past is formed by combining the appropriate present tense form of helping verb **הָאָבֵן** [hóbm] 'have' with the past participle of the main verb. The regular past participle is formed by prefixing **נע-** and suffixing **-ט** to the stem, giving the template **נע+STEM+ט**. The **נע-** prefix disappears in the past participles of verbs with unstressed prefixes (→ §8.1), e.g. **מֵאַרשטײַן** 'understand' → past participle **מֵאַרשטאַנען** 'understood'. It also disappears in verbs with stressed suffix **-ירן**, e.g. **אָרגאַניזירן** [organizírn] 'organize' → past participle **אָרגאַנאַזירט** 'organized'.

7.6.1.1 Singular present of **הָאָבֵן**

I have **איך האָב**
 you (familiar) have **דו האָסט**
 you (formal) have **איר האָט**
 he has **ער האָט**
 she has **זי האָט**
 people have / we have / one has **מ'האָט**

SAMPLE SINGULAR PAST USING **הָאָבֵן**: 'say' זאָגן

I (have) said **איך האָב געזאָגט**
 you (familiar) (have) said **דו האָסט געזאָגט**
 you (formal) (have) said **איר האָט געזאָגט**
 he says **ער האָט געזאָגט**
 she says **זי האָט געזאָגט**
 it was said / people said / one said **מ'האָט געזאָגט**

7.6.1.2 Plural present of האָבן

we have [hobm] מיר האָבן

you have איר האָט

they have [hobm] זיי האָבן

SAMPLE PLURAL PAST USING האָבן: דאָגן 'say'

we (have) said מיר האָבן געזאָגט

you (have) said איר האָט געזאָגט

they (have) said זיי האָבן געזאָגט

SAMPLE VERBS WITH REGULAR PAST AND THEIR PAST PARTICIPLES

נעברענט → burn ברענען

געגלייבט → believe גלייבן

געוויינט → cry וויינען

געזוכט → look for; search זוכן

געטומלט → make noise טומלען

געלאכט → laugh לאַכן

גערייניקט → clean (up) רייניקן

געשטערט → bother שטערן

7.6.2 Past participle in (ע)ל-

Some participles are historically of the shape גע+STEM+ען (or גע+STEM+ען if the stem ends in *ל*, *נק*, *נג*, *נ*, *ת* following a consonant, or a stressed vowel). Participles in (ע)ל- are frequently accompanied by internal vowel shift.

7.6.2.1 Participle in (ע)ל with no vowel shifts

געבעטן → 'ask for; request' בעטן

געגראָבן → 'dig'
 געהאַלטן → 'hold; be of the opinion'
 געטרָגן → 'wear; carry; be pregnant'
 געוואָשן → 'wash (trans.)'
 געשאַפן → 'create'
 געשלאָגן → 'hit; strike; beat'

7.6.2.2 Participle in (ע) with י → י

(ט → ד) אויסגעמיסן → 'avoid'
 געביטן → 'change'
 געביסן → 'bite'
 געוויזן → 'show'
 געטריבן [gətrɪbm] → 'drive; propel; chase' [tráybm]
 (ט → ד) געליסן → 'suffer' לידן
 (געליגן var.) געליען → 'lend' לייען
 געקליבן [gəklɪbm] → 'collect' [kláybm] קלייבן
 געקליבן [gəklɪbm] → 'prepare to; ready oneself' [kláybm] זיך קלייבן
 געריבן [gərɪbm] → 'rub' [ráybm] רייבן זיך
 געריסן → 'tear' רייסן
 געשויגן → 'remain silent' שוויגן
 געשניטן → 'whip' שניטן
 (ט → ד) געשניטן → 'cut' שנידן
 געשריבן [gəshrɪbm] → 'write' [shráybm] שרייבן
 (געשריגן S. var.) געשריען → 'yell; scream' שרייען

7.6.2.3 Participle in (ע) with ע → ע

געמאָסטן → 'measure' מעסטן
 געשאַטן → 'slaughter' שעכטן

געשענקען → 'give (as a gift)' שטענקען

7.6.2.4 Participle in (ע) with י → ו

געבונדן → 'tie (up)' בינדן

געדונגען → 'infer' דרינגען

געוונקען → 'limp' הינקען

געוואנטשן → 'wish (somebody something)' ווינטשן

געזונגען → 'sing' זינגען

געזונקען → 'sink' זינקען

געטרונקען → 'drink' טרינקען

געצוואנגען → 'force' צווינגען

געשלונגען → 'swallow' שלינגען

געוואונען → 'win' געווינען

7.6.2.5 Various vowel and consonant changes

דיך געבויגן → 'bend down' זיך בייגן

(gəbréynkt) געברענגט (S. var. געבראָכט) → 'bring' ברענגען

[úfgehoybm] אויפֿגעהויבן → 'lift' [úfheybm] אויפֿהייבן

גענומען → 'take' נעמען

(N.E. var. געאַרלירן) → 'lose' געאַרלירן

געאַרשטאַנען → 'understand' געאַרשטיין

(N.E. var. געשחאָרן) → 'swear' שחערן

7.7 MINORITY PAST TENSE: THE זיין VERBS

A minority of verbs form their past by combining the appropriate present of זיין 'be', rather than האָבן 'have' with the past participle (cf. French *être*,

German *sein*). All זײַן verbs have past participles in (ען), usually with vowel shift. All are intransitive.

7.7.1 Singular present of זײַן

I am איך בין
 you (familiar) are דו ביסט
 you (formal) are איר זײַט (S. var. זענט)
 he is ער איז
 she is זי איז
 we are / people are / one is מ'איז

SAMPLE SINGULAR PAST USING זײַן: 'sleep' שלאָפֿן

I (have) slept איך בין געשלאָפֿן
 you (familiar) (have) slept דו ביסט געשלאָפֿן
 you (formal) (have) slept איר זײַט געשלאָפֿן
 he (has) slept ער איז געשלאָפֿן
 she (has) slept זי איז געשלאָפֿן
 we/people (have) slept; one slept מ'איז געשלאָפֿן

7.7.2 Plural present of זײַן

we are מיר זײַנען (S. var. זענען)
 you are איר זײַט
 they are זיי זײַנען (S. var. זענען)

SAMPLE PLURAL PAST USING זײַן: 'sleep' שלאָפֿן

we (have) slept מיר זײַנען געשלאָפֿן

you (have) slept איר זינט געשלאפן
 they (have) slept זיי זיינען געשלאפן

7.7.3 Basic זײַן verbs

The basic זײַן verbs generally have to do with motion, motionlessness, states of existence, and the life cycle. Where a זײַן verb acquires a transitive meaning, it automatically joins the more usual האָבן verbs (→ §7.6), e.g. transitive הענגען 'hang (something / somebody)' with האָבן vs. intransitive הענגען 'hang; be hanging' with זײַן.

BASIC VERBS WITH PAST WITH זײַן AND THEIR PAST PARTICIPLES

געבליבן [gəblíbm] 'remain' → [bláybm]

געגאנגען → גיין 'go; walk'

געלונגען → 'be successful (in doing something)'

גערעכטן → 'turn out as planned'

געשען [gəshén] 'happen; occur' → געשען

געהאנגען (S. var. געהאנגען) → 'hang' הענגען

געוואקסן → 'grow' האַקסן

געוואָרן → 'become' ווערן

געווען → 'be' זײַן

געזעסן → 'sit' זיצן

געלאָפּן → 'run' לויפּן

געלעגן → 'lie' ליגן

געפאלן → 'fall' פאלן

געפאָרן → 'go (by vehicle)' פאָרן

געפליען → 'fly' פליען

געקומען → 'come' קומען

נעקראָפֿן 'climb; crawl' → קריכן
 געשטאָרבן 'die' → שטארבן
 געשטאַנען 'stand' → שטין
 געשלאָפֿן 'sleep' → שלאָפֿן
 געשפּרונגען 'jump' → שפּרינגען

7.7.4 Derivative זײַן verbs

Derivative זײַן verbs are prefixed forms of basic זײַן verbs. As is often the case with prefixed verbs (→ §8), they may in the course of centuries wander far from the meanings of the base verbs from which they derive. Derivative זײַן verbs preserve the major grammatical features of the base verbs from which they derive – past with זײַן, past participle in (ען), and intransitivity. One of the זײַן verbs, ווערן 'become' can itself be used to form analytic verbs, all of which automatically form their past tense with זײַן (→ §9.1.7).

SAMPLES OF DERIVATIVE זײַן VERBS

אויסגעגאַנגען [óyzgəgəngən] 'die; run out' → אויסגיין [óyzgəyn]
 אויסגעשטאַנען 'put up with' → אויסשטיין
 אַרײַנגעפֿאַלן 'commit a blunder; fall in; be deceived' → אַרײַנפֿאַלן
 בײַזעחען [bəyzəyn] 'be present' → בײַזיין
 פֿאַרגעקומען 'happen; occur' → פֿאַרקומען

7.8 PLUPERFECT PAST TENSE

The pluperfect past is formed by inserting געהאַט (past participle of האָבן) before the past participle of the main verb. The pluperfect is rarely encountered with זײַן verbs.

SAMPLES OF THE PLUPERFECT PAST

איך האָב איך געהאַט געוואָרנט איר דאָלט נישט גיין

I had warned you (formal) not to go

דאָס האָבן זיי אונדז געהאַט געזאָגט פֿריער

That is what they had told us beforehand

דעם דאָזיקן פֿילם האָבן מיר געהאַט געזען

We had seen that film

7.9 FUTURE TENSE

The future tense is formed by combining the appropriate part of וועלן 'will / shall' with the infinitive. The conjugation of וועלן is irregular. In normal speech, the appropriate part of וועלן used to form the future tense is phonetically reduced as transcribed (→ §§7.9.1 – 7.9.2). Future helping verb וועלן should not be confused with וועלן 'want' (→ §9.1.6). The infinitives are identical but the present tense conjugations differ markedly.

7.9.1 Singular future with וועלן

I will [ikh vel / khvel / ikhl] איך וועל

you (familiar) will [du vest / duəst / dust] דו וועסט

you (formal) will [ir vet / irət / irt] איר וועט

he will [er vet / erət / ert] ער וועט

she will [zi vet / ziat / zit] זי וועט

we will / people will / one will [məvət / mət] מ'וועט

SAMPLE SINGULAR FUTURE: זאָגן 'say'

I will say איך וועל זאָגן

you (familiar) will say דו וועסט זאָגן

you (formal) will say איר וועט זאָגן

he will say ער וועט זאָגן

she will say זי וועט זאָגן

people will say / we will say / one will say מ'וועט זאָגן

7.9.2 Plural future with וועלן

we will [mir vein / miln (N.E.) / mirn (S.)] מיר וועלן

you will [ir vet / irat / irt] איר וועט

they will [zey vein / zeyn / zein / zain] זיי וועלן

SAMPLE PLURAL FUTURE: זאָגן 'say'

we will say מיר וועלן זאָגן

you (plural/formal singular) will say איר וועט זאָגן

they will say זיי וועלן זאָגן

7.10 IMMEDIATE FUTURE TENSE

The immediate future is formed by the appropriately conjugated present tense of גיין 'go'. It denotes the intention to carry out the action in the nearer rather than in the more distant future.

SAMPLES OF THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

I'm going to buy a book איך גיין קויפֿן אַ בוך

I'm going to tell him off איר גיין אַרײַנזאָגן [em]

They're going to think about it זיי גייען טראַכטן וועגן דעם

7.9.2 PLUPERFECT FUTURE TENSE

The pluperfect future is formed by the appropriate part of **וועלן** (→ §§7.9.1 – 7.9.2) plus infinitive **האָבן** plus the past participle of the main verb.

SAMPLES OF THE PLUPERFECT FUTURE

איך וועל איך האָבן געוואָרנט איר דאָלס נישט גיין
I will have warned you (formal) not to go

דאָס וועלן זיי אונדז האָבן געזאָגט פֿריער
That is what they will have told us beforehand

דעם דאָזיקן פֿילם וועלן מיר האָבן געזען
We will have seen that film

8 PREFIXED VERBS

8.0 OVERVIEW

A prefix can provide a verb with a special nuance or a completely new meaning. The modern meanings of many prefixed verbs may be distantly related, or not obviously related at all, to those of their unprefixed base forms. Many prefixes have become so attached to certain verbs that the verb on its own provides an imperfective mood suggesting that the action is somehow incomplete. There are two types of verbal prefixes: unstressed prefixes and stressed prefixes. Stressed prefixes emerge as separate words in the present tense.

8.1 UNSTRESSED PREFIXES

Unstressed prefixes are retained in all tenses. In the past tense, the past participle prefix -לל disappears; its function is assumed by the unstressed prefix itself. Some of the six unstressed prefixes do have some general primitive meaning. Use over the centuries has, however, obscured it in many instances. For many, a historical connection may be inferred (e.g. **אנטדעקן** 'discover' from **אנט** + **דעקן** 'cover'; cf. English 'dis' + 'cover').

8.1.1 -אנט

General meaning: negation; distancing from; undoing of.

SAMPLES OF -אנט

אנטדעקן	[andékn] 'discover' (→ past participle אַנטדעקט)
זיך אַנטזאָגן	[andzág] 'refuse' (→ past participle אַנטזאָגט)
אַנטלאָפֿן ווערן	'run away from' (→ past participle געוואָרן אַנטלאָפֿן)
אַנטמוטיקן	'discourage' (→ past participle אַנטמוטיקט)
אַנטשלאָפֿן ווערן	'fall asleep' (→ past participle געוואָרן אַנטשלאָפֿן)

8.1.2. באַ-

General meaning: transitivity of intransitive verbs; application of one thing to another; thoroughness of action; bringing a state of existence into being.

SAMPLES OF באַ-

באַהאַלטן	'hide' (→ past participle באַהאַלטן)
באַזוכן	'visit' (→ past participle באַזוכט)
באַליידיקן	'insult' (→ past participle באַליידיקט)
באַמערקן	'notice' (→ past participle באַמערקט)
באַרוואַקן	'calm (someone) down' (→ past participle באַרוואַקט)
זיך באַרוואַקן	'calm (oneself) down' (→ past participle זיך באַרוואַקט)

8.1.3. גע-

-גע is a relic prefix. Most of the stems of the -גע verbs do not survive as unprefixed verbs.

SAMPLES OF גע-

געבוירן ווערן	(N.E. var. געבאָרן ווערן) 'be born' (→ past participle געבוירן)
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	(געבאָרן געחאָרן; N.E. var. געבוירן געחאָרן)
געדענקען	[gədéynkən] 'remember' (→ past participle)
געחאָרדערן	(N.E. var. געחאָרדערן) 'find out' (→ past participle)
	(געחאָרדערן געחאָרדערן; N.E. var. געחאָרדערן)
געווינען	'win' (→ past participle)
געטרויען	'trust' (→ past participle)
זיך געזעגענען	'say goodbye (to one another)' (→ past participle)
	(געזעגענט)
געפֿינען	'find' (→ past participle)
געשען	[gəshén] 'happen; occur' (→ past participle)

8.1.4 דער- (frequently [da])

General meaning: completeness of action; carrying through of the action to its conclusion.

SAMPLES OF דער-

דערהרגענען	[dahárgənən] 'kill' (→ past participle)
	[dahárgət])
זיך דערפֿרייען	'rejoice (esp. with the company or presence of another person)' (→ past participle)
דערציילן	'tell (a story); recount' (→ past participle)
דערקענען	'recognize' (→ past participle)
דערשיסן	'shoot (dead)' (→ past participle)

8.1.5 פֿאַר-

General meaning: completeness of action; initiation of a change in circumstances; debasement of the value or success of the action.

SAMPLES OF -מַאֲרֵ

מַאֲרֵבַּעֶטְעוֹן	'improve' (→ past participle מַאֲרֵבַּעֶטְט)
מַאֲרֵנַעֵטן	'forget' (→ past participle מַאֲרֵנַעֵטן)
מַאֲרֵעֵלְטִיקֵן	'suspect' (→ past participle מַאֲרֵעֵלְטִיקֵט)
מַאֲרֵדְרִיֵּט	'entangle; mess up' (→ past participle מַאֲרֵדְרִיֵּט)
זִיךְ מַאֲרֵדְרִיֵּט	'get tied up in' (→ past participle זִיךְ מַאֲרֵדְרִיֵּט)
מַאֲרֵלִוִּין	'lose' (→ past participle מַאֲרֵלִוִּין; N.E. var. מַאֲרֵלְאָרֵן)
מַאֲרֵפִירֵט	'lead astray; seduce' (→ past participle מַאֲרֵפִירֵט)
מַאֲרֵשְׁטַאָרְקֵן	'strengthen' (→ past participle: מַאֲרֵשְׁטַאָרְקֵט)
מַאֲרֵשְׁעֵנַעֵרֵן	'make (more) beautiful' (→ past participle: מַאֲרֵשְׁעֵנַעֵרֵט)

8.1.6 -צע

General meaning: coming apart; spreading out; in all directions; spacing out of the verbal action; total undoing of something.

SAMPLES OF -צע

צעברעכֵן	'break' (→ past participle צעברעכֵן)
צעניטן	'spill all over the place' (→ past participle צעניטן)
צעטומלֵט	'confound' (→ past participle צעטומלֵט)
צעטרענצלֵט	'squander completely' (→ past participle צעטרענצלֵט)
צעלֵאָט	'grab up; buy out' (→ past participle צעלֵאָט)
צעקאַלֵעִטשעט	'ruin; cripple' (→ past participle צעקאַלֵעִטשעט)

8.2 STRESSED PREFIXES

Like their unstressed counterparts, stressed prefixes are deeply rooted in the history of the language, and the primitive senses of the prefixes have often been lost. The heavy stress of stressed prefixes relegates the stem to

secondary stress status (→ §§2.3.1.3 – 2.3.1.4). In the present tense, the stressed prefix separates off and appears *after* the verb. In the past tense, -ל- is infixed *between* the stressed prefix and the stem to form a one-word past participle. The status of the stressed prefix as a distinct entity is so strong that it often blocks consonant assimilation of voice or voicelessness (→ §2.2.1 – 2.2.4), especially when sentence rhythm provides for heavy wordstress; cf. e.g. heavily stressed [óys gə mátert] 'completely exhausted' vs. less heavily stressed [óyzgəmatərt] 'exhausted' for אויסגעהמאטערט (past participle of אויסהאלטערן). Model verb is צוזאגן [tsúzogn] 'promise'.

SAMPLE OF CONJUGATION OF STRESSED PREFIX: צוזאגן

present singular

I promise	איך זאג צו [zog tsú]
you (familiar) promise	דו זאגסט צו [zokst tsú]
you (formal) promise	איר זאגנט צו [zokt tsú]
he promises	ער זאגט צו [zokt tsú]
she promises	זי זאגט צו [zokt tsú]
it is promised / people promise / one promises	מ'זאגט צו [məzəkt tsú]
Promise! (familiar)	זאג צו! [zog tsú]
Promise! (formal)	זאגנט צו! [zokt tsú]

present plural

we promise	מיר זאגן צו [zogn tsú]
you promise	איר זאגנט צו [zokt tsú]
they promise	זיי זאגן צו [zogn tsú]
Promise!	זאגנט צו! [zokt tsú]

present participle

(while) promising	צוזאגנדיק [tsúzogndik]
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past singular

I (have) promised [tsúgezokt] איך האָב צוגעזאָגט

you (have) promised (familiar) דו האָסט צוגעזאָגט

you (have) promised (formal) איר האָט צוגעזאָגט

he (has) promised ער האָט צוגעזאָגט

she (has) promised זי האָט צוגעזאָגט

it was promised / people promised / one promised מ'האָט צוגעזאָגט

past plural

we (have) promised מיר האָבן צוגעזאָגט

you (have) promised איר האָט צוגעזאָגט

they (have) promised זיי האָבן צוגעזאָגט

future singular

I will promise איך וועל צוזאָגן

you (familiar) will promise דו וועסט צוזאָגן

you (formal) will promise איר וועט צוזאָגן

he will promise ער וועט צוזאָגן

she will promise זי וועט צוזאָגן

they will promise / we will promise / one will promise מ'וועט צוזאָגן

future plural

we will promise מיר וועלן צוזאָגן

you will promise איר וועט צוזאָגן

they will promise זיי וועלן צוזאָגן

8.2.1 אויס-

General meaning: completeness of action; lengthiness of the action; undoing of a prior situation; suddenness; outward action.

SAMPLES OF אויס-

אויסהרגענען	[óys hargənən] 'annihilate; wipe out completely' (→ past participle אויסגעהרגעט [óys gə hargət] / [óyzgəhargət])
אויסוואשן	'wash (thoroughly)' (→ past participle אויסגעוואשן)
זיך אויסוואיינען	'cry one's eyes out' (→ past participle זיך אויסגעוואינט)
אויסזאגן	'reveal' (→ past participle אויסגעזאגט [óygzəzəkt])
אויסלעשן	'extinguish' (→ past participle אויסגעלעשן)
אויסמײדן	'avoid' (→ past participle אויסגעמײדן)
אויסשרײען	'yell suddenly' (→ past participle אויסגעשרײען; S. var. אויסגעשריגן)

8.2.2 אויף- [ú]

General meaning: completeness of action; Cf. English *up*. Note that the pronunciation [ú] does not reflect the spelling.

SAMPLES OF אויף-

אויףהײבן	[úfheybm] 'pick up; lift' (→ past participle אויףגעהױבן [úfgəhoybm])
אויףוײזן	[úfvayzn] 'demonstrate; document' (→ past participle אויףגעוײזן [úfgəvizn])
אויףעפֿענען	[úfefənən] 'open up' (→ past participle אויףגעפֿענט [úfgəfənt])
אויףשטײן	[úfshteyn] 'get up' (→ past participle אויףגעשטאנען [úfgəshtanən])

8.2.3 אומ- -um-

General meaning: return to former state.

אומ- -um-

אומברענגען	'(systematically / officially) kill' (→ past participle אומגעברענגט [úmgebreynt]) S. var. אומגעברענגט
אומקומען	'(systematically/officially) be killed' (→ past participle אומגעקומען)
אומקערן	'give back; return' (→ past participle אומגעקערט)
זיך אומקערן	'come back; return' (→ past participle זיך אומגעקערט)

8.2.4 אונטער- -unter-

General meaning: under; at the bottom of; secretly; moderately; not quite fully.

אונטער- -unter-

אונטערהינקען	'limp; be less than proficient' (→ past participle אונטערהינקען)
זיך אונטערפֿוילן	'be lazy temporarily / for a specific task' (→ past participle זיך אונטערפֿוילט)
אונטערווערן	'secretly hand over (to)' (→ past participle אונטערווערט)
אונטערשרײַבן	[úntershraybm] 'sign (one's name)' (→ past participle אונטערשרײַבן [úntergeshribm])

8.2.5 איבער- -über-

General meaning: completeness of the action; repetition of the action; action through time or space; excessiveness.

SAMPLES OF איבער-

איבערזעצן	'translate' (→ past participle איבערנעזעצט)
איבערטרײַבן	[ʔəʔtraybm] 'exaggerate' (→ past participle איבערנעטרײַבן [ʔəʔəʔtribm])
איבערלאָפֿן	'have a snack' (→ past participle איבערנעלאָפֿט)
איבערמאַכן	'make over; renew' (→ past participle איבערנעמאַכט)
איבערקוקן	'look over' (→ past participle איבערנעקוקט)

8.2.6 איין-

General meaning: enter a new state; change of situation.

SAMPLES OF איין-

זיך איינגעוויינען	'get used to' (→ past participle זיך איינגעוויינט)
איינחיקלען	'wrap up' (→ past participle איינחיקלט)
זיך איינלעבן	'get used to living (in a place)' (→ past participle זיך איינגעלעבט [áyngələpt])
איינרעדן	'talk into' (→ past participle איינגערעדט [áyngəʔet])
איינשטימען	'agree' (→ past participle איינשטימט)
זיך איינקשנען	[áynakshənən] 'be stubborn about something' (→ past participle זיך איינגעקשנט [áyngəkshnt])

8.2.7 אָן-

General meaning: specification of the action.

SAMPLES OF אָן-

אָנדרודלען	'incite (someone's anger against a third party)' (→ past participle אָנגעדודלט)
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אָנהייבן	[ʔnhɛybm] 'start' (→ past participle אָנגעהויבן [ʔngəhoybm])
אָנזיין	'point out' (→ past participle אָנגעזיין)
אָנטאָפּן	[ʔntapm] 'touch' (→ past participle אָנגעטאָט)
אָנשרייבן	[ʔnshraybm] 'write' (→ past participle אָנגעשריבן [ʔngəshribm])

8.2.8 -ט

General meaning: completion of the action. Note that in the past tense, the prefix may be pronounced [ʔp] or [ʔ].

SAMPLES OF -ט

אָפּאַרבעטן	'complete a period of work' (→ past participle אָפּגעאַרבעט [ʔ(p)gəarbət])
אָפּטאָן	'play a trick' (→ past participle אָפּגעטאָן [ʔ(p)gəton])
אָפּזיין	'postpone; procrastinate' (→ past participle אָפּגעזיין [ʔ(p)gəleykt])
אָפּענדיקן	'finish completely' (→ past participle אָפּגענדיקט [ʔ(p)gəendikt])
אָפּעסן	'finish eating' (→ past participle אָפּגעסן [ʔ(p)gəgesn])

8.2.9 -י

General meaning: by; at.

SAMPLES OF -י

בייזיין	'attend' (→ past participle בייגעווען [bəygəven])
בייליין	'enclose' (→ past participle בייגעליינט [bəygəleykt])

בייִקומען	'overcome' (→ past participle
בייִשטײערן	'make a contribution' (→ past participle

8.2.10 פֿאַר-

General meaning: anticipate; come before.

SAMPLES OF פֿאַר-

פֿאַרלייגן	'propose' (→ past participle פֿאַרגעלייגט [fórgəleykt])
פֿאַרשלאָגן	'propose (in more formal/parliamentary style)' (→ past participle פֿאַרגעשלאָגן [fórgəshlogn])
פֿאַרשטעלן	'introduce' (→ past participle פֿאַרגעשטעלט)
זיך פֿאַרשטעלן	'imagine; suppose' (→ past participle זיך פֿאַרגעשטעלט)
פֿאַרקומען	'occur' (→ past participle פֿאַרגעקומען)

8.2.11 צו-

SAMPLES OF צו-

זיך צוהערן	'listen to; pay (careful) attention to; obey' (→ past participle זיך צוגעהערט)
צוזאָגן	'promise' (→ past participle צוגעזאָגט [tsúgezokt])
צוטשעם(ענ)ען	[tsútshepenən] 'add on; affix; attach' (→ past participle צוגעטשעמט [tsúgetshépet])
זיך צוטשעם(ענ)ען	'become attached; become a nuisance/pest (to)' (→ past participle זיך צוגעטשעמט)
צולויפֿן	'run over (to)' (→ past participle צוגעלאָפֿן)
צונעמען	'take away' (→ past participle צוגענומען)
זיך צופאַסן	'fit in; conform' (→ past participle זיך צוגעפאַסט)
זיך צוקוקן	'watch; observe' (→ past participle זיך צוגעקוקט)

8.2.12 Free stressed prefixes

The free stressed prefixes retain much of the historic force of their meanings, and can usually be prefixed at will to verbs. They often mark the direction of movement or action, or some prepositional aspect (e.g. with what or whom). Most can double as adverbs or prepositions on their own. A number of them, however, have entered into fixed combinations with specific verbs, yielding new meanings that cannot always be inferred from the base verb, e.g. דורכ־קומען [dú(r)khkumən] 'work it out; compromise' (from דורך 'through' plus קומען 'come'), נאָכ־קרימען 'mimic' (from נאָך 'after' plus קרימען 'make faces'), פֿאַרויט־זאָגן [foróyszogn] 'predict' (from פֿאַרויט 'before' plus זאָגן 'say').

FREE STRESSED PREFIXES

through [(a)dú(r)kh] - דורכ־

(over) there; to there; thither - אַהינ־

(over) here; to here; hither - אַהער־

away - אַוועק־

with - מיט־

opposite; vis-à-vis; in reply to - אָנעקעגן־

down - אָפֿ - אָפֿוואַרט

out - אַרויס־

upward [arú] - אַרויפ־

around - אַרום־

in - אין־

over - אַרונטער־

after - נאָכ־

past; by - פֿאַרבײַ־

פֿאַרויס - before

פֿונאַנדער - apart; in all directions

צוזאַמען - together

צונויף - bring together

SAMPLES OF FREE STRESSED PREFIXES

(א)דור-5-	פֿאַרדורפֿאַרן 'pass through (by vehicle)'
אַהין-	פֿאַהינשחיימען 'swim there'; אַהינגיין 'go there'
אַהער-	פֿאַהערקומען 'come here'
אַוועק-	פֿאַוועקוואַרפֿן [avéggeyn] 'go away; leave'; אַוועקניין 'throw away'
אַ(נט)קעגן-	אָפּזיך 'oppose'; אַ(נט)קעגנשטעלן
אַנידער-	אָנידערזעצן 'sit down'; זיך אָנידערזעצן
אַראָפּ-	אַראָפּשפּרינגען 'jump down'; אַראָפּברענגען 'bring down'
אַרויס-	אַרויסלאָזן 'let out; release'; אַרויסוואַרפֿן 'throw out'
אַרויף-	אַרויףסטרענגן [arúftrögn] 'carry up'; אַרויףקריכן [arúfkríkhn] 'climb up'
אַרומ-	אַרומפֿאַרן 'travel around'; אַרומזוכן 'look around for; search'
אַרונטער-	אַרונטערלאָזן 'let down; lower'
אַריין-	אַריינלאָזן 'let in'; אַריינזאָגן 'tell off; scold' (lit. 'tell in')
אַריבער-	אַריבערשפּרינגען 'jump over'
מיט-	מיטנעמען 'take with'; מיטליידן 'suffer together with'
נאַך-5-	נאַךלאָויפֿן 'run after'
פֿאַרבײַ-	פֿאַרבײַפֿאַרן [farbáyforhn] 'travel past; pass through'
פֿונאַנדער-	פֿונאַנדערלאָויפֿן 'run in all directions; scatter'; זיך פֿונאַנדערלאָויפֿן

פֿאַרויס-	פֿאַרויסלויפֿן 'run in front of'
צוזאַמען-	צוזאַמענאַרבעטן 'work (well) together'
צונויט-	צונויפֿזאַמלען [tsənóy/zamlən] 'gather together'

8.2.12.1 Free stressed prefixes without main verbs

The free stressed prefixes -אָדורך- (but not its parallel form -דורך-), -אָוועק-, -אָריבער-, -אָרונטער-, -אָרייַן-, -אָרויס-, -אָרעם- can be used on their own without a main verb. Their past tense is formed with helping verb זיין (→§7.7). Use of free stressed prefixes without a main verb often provides a sentence with increased dynamic force. Some have become established in idiomatic expressions, e.g. ער איז אָרעם פֿון זינען 'He's off his rocker' (lit. 'gone down from sense'; cf. English 'out of his mind').

SAMPLES OF STRESSED PREFIXES WITHOUT MAIN VERBS

She left yesterday זי איז געבליבן אָוועק

He went up the stairs ער איז אָרויף [arúf] די טרעט

They entered the house זיי זינען אָריין אין הויז

8.3 PERFECTIVE VS. NAKED VERBS

Many unstressed and stressed prefixes have become so attached to certain verbs as to render the verb on its own rare and somewhat strange sounding to native speakers. In these cases, the prefixed versions have in effect become the present day base forms of the verb, and the unprefixed 'naked' forms are reserved for situations where the action is incomplete or vague. Thus, אָנשרייבן [ónshraybm] is the usual verb for 'write'. The use of שרײַבן on its own may be reserved for general situations e.g. וואָס שרײַבסטו? [vos shráypstə?] 'What are you writing?' Use of the unprefixed form may also

signify incompleteness of the action, e.g. איך האָב נעשריבן אַ ברייף 'I was writing a letter', which may imply that the letter was somehow not completed. The equivalent of 'I wrote a letter' is איך האָב אָנגעשריבן אַ ברייף. Analogously צוקומען is the basic form for 'come (somewhere)', צוגיין for 'go (somewhere)'; קומען and גיין on their own are more general concepts.

9 ANALYTIC VERBS

9.0 OVERVIEW

Unlike synthetic verbs which synthesize the main verb and its person, tense and number into a single word by prefixing or suffixing the stem (→ §7), analytic verbs 'analyze these out' by factoring down to the individual grammatical components, which are maintained by a helping verb. In all analytic verbs, by definition, the main verb is uninflected – neither prefixed nor suffixed nor internally changed in any way, irrespective of person, tense or number. Person, tense and number are rather indicated by the inflection of the appropriate helping verb which accompanies it. Many everyday synthetic verbs are used analytically when the speaker wishes to modify or specify the meaning along the lines of one of the available helping verbs that serve as formers of specialized analytic verbs. Some verbs, on the other hand, are historically analytic. They are the inherently analytic verbs, which do not exist as synthetic verbs. Analytic verbs require no detailed analysis or conjugation because they don't change. It is the helping verbs that inflect, and they tend to be irregular.

9.1 SPECIALIZED ANALYTIC VERBS

9.1.1 Analytic verb former נעבן

נעבן [gébm] 'give a' designates the action, in conceptual terms, as a single (and usually brief) event, rather than an ongoing affair. Its present is formed

with the present tense of irregular **געבן** as helping verb plus indefinite article **אַ** plus the stem of the main verb. In the past tense, the participle **געגעבן** [gəgəbm] usually follows the stem. In the future, the inflected part of futurizing **וועלן** must precede the **אַ** plus stem sequence. The infinitive usually follows. Many analytic **געבן** verbs have alternative forms with **טאָן** (→ §9.1.9).

9.1.1.1 singular of helping verb **געבן** 'give'

I give	איך גיב
you (familiar) give	דו גיסט
you (formal) give	איר גיט
he gives	ער גיט
she gives	זי גיט
people give / we give/ one gives	מ'גיט
give! (familiar)	גיב!
give! (formal)	גיט!

9.1.1.2 plural of helping verb **געבן** 'give'

we give	מיר גיבן
you give	איר גיט
they give	זיי גיבן
give!	גיט!

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERB WITH **געבן**: **געבן אַ קיס** 'give a kiss'

present singular

I am giving a kiss	איך גיב אַ קיס
You (familiar) are giving a kiss	דו גיסט אַ קיס
You (formal) are giving a kiss	איר גיט אַ קיס

He is giving a kiss ער גיט אַ קוש

She is giving a kiss זי גיט אַ קוש

One gives a kiss; You should give a kiss מ'גייט אַ קוש

Give a kiss! (familiar) גיב אַ קישו

Give a kiss! (formal) גיט אַ קישו

present plural

We are giving a kiss מיר גיבן אַ קוש

You are giving a kiss איר גיט אַ קוש

They are giving a kiss זיי גיבן אַ קוש

Give a kiss! גיט אַ קישו

past singular

I gave a kiss איך האָב אַ קוש געגעבן

You (familiar) gave a kiss דו האָסט אַ קוש געגעבן

You (formal) gave a kiss איר האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

He gave a kiss ער האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

She gave a kiss זי האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

Everybody kissed; People gave a kiss; We gave a kiss מ'האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

past plural

We gave a kiss מיר האָבן אַ קוש געגעבן

You gave a kiss איר האָט אַ קוש געגעבן

They gave a kiss זיי האָבן אַ קוש געגעבן

future singular

I will give a kiss [khvel akúzh gedm] איך וועל אַ קוש געבן

You (familiar) will give a kiss [dust akúzh gedm] דו וועסט אַ קוש געבן

You (formal) will give a kiss [irət akúzh gebm] איר העט א קוש געבן

He will give a kiss [erət akúzh gebm] ער העט א קוש געבן

She will give a kiss [zit akúzh gebm] זי העט א קוש געבן

We will/People will kiss [mət akúzh gebm] מ'העט א קוש געבן

future plural

We will give a kiss [mɪn / mɪrɪn a kúzh gebm] מיר העלן א קוש געבן

You will give a kiss [irət a kúzh gebm] איר העט א קוש געבן

They will give a kiss [zeln a kúzh gebm] זיי העלן א קוש געבן

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERBS WITH געבן

promise (lit. 'give a word') א האַרט געבן

advise; give (a piece of) advice אַן עצה [éytsə] געבן

cope; manage זיך אַן עצה [éytsə] געבן

slap / give a smack אַ מאַטש געבן

smile / give a smile אַ שמייל געבן

9.1.2 Analytic verb former דאַרפֿן

דאַרפֿן (usually pronounced [dáfɪn]) 'must; have to; should; ought to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. The third person singular has no ט-, hence ער/זי/מ'ט דאַרף.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF דאַרפֿן

I have to go איך דאַרף אַוועק

Why do you have to go? פֿאַרוואָס דאַרפֿסטו גיין?

What do you need it for? [avós dáístəs?] אויף וואָס דאַרפֿסטו עס?

I must tell you the truth [éməs] איך דאַרף זיך זאָגן דעם אמת

We really have to go מ'דאַרף טאַקע גיין

9.1.3 Analytic verb former האַלטן אין

האַלטן אין 'in the process of; in the middle of; in the midst of' is formed by the appropriate part of האַלטן plus preposition אין plus infinitive. It can be applied to any verb that expresses an ongoing action, and often corresponds with English *-ing*.

SAMPLES OF USE OF האַלטן אין

She's in the middle of writing a letter זי האַלט אין שרייבן אַ ברייף

We're eating now מיר האַלטן איצטער אין עסן

9.1.4 Analytic verb former האַלטן אין איין

האַלטן אין איין 'keep (on); all the time; constantly' is formed by the appropriate part of האַלטן plus איין plus infinitive. It can be applied to any verb that expresses an ongoing action.

SAMPLES OF USE OF האַלטן אין איין

Why do you keep jumping? וואָס האַלטסטו אין איין שפּרינגען?

They keep laughing זיי האַלטן אין איין לאַכן

9.1.5 Analytic verb former האָלטן

האָלטן 'would' is formed with either the infinitive or the past participle of the main verb. It is used to express a conditional or contingent mood. The past participle is used most frequently. The infinitive tends to be reserved for a rather more parliamentary style.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF האָלטן

What would you (familiar) say? וואָס האָלטסטו [voistu] געזאָגט?

And you (familiar) would go? און דו האָלטסט [voist] געגאָנגען?

I would deal with it differently איך האָלט אַנדערש געהאַנדלט

I would argue otherwise איך וואָלט טענהן [táynən] אַנדערש
 We would wish to know the truth [émas] מיר וואָלטן וועלן היסן דעם אמת

9.1.5.1 Alternative conditional with ווען

A conditional mood may also be formed by conjunction ווען, lit. 'when; if' that also has the sense of 'if it were the case that'. It occurs in this sense in the present tense only, but the present with ווען is frequently used to cover situations in the past. ווען often serves as the if-clause in a sentence in which וואָלט occurs in the then-clause (→ §§14.4.5 – 14.4.5.1).

SAMPLES OF THE ALTERNATIVE CONDITIONAL WITH ווען

If I were Rothschild... ווען איך בין ראָטשילד
 ווען איך הייס דעמאָלט וואָלט היינט געווען אַנדערש
 If I had known then, things would be different today

9.1.6 Analytic verb former וועלן

וועלן 'want to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. Although the infinitive is identical with וועלן 'will (future tense helping verb)' (→ §7.9), the rest of its conjugation differs markedly. The stem vowel of וועלן 'want to' is [י] in the present, [אַ] in the past and [ע] in the infinitive, hence in the future. While the conjugated parts of וועלן 'will' are phonetically reduced in everyday speech, those of וועלן 'want to' are not. Note the contrasting transcriptions of each in the future tense of the sample provided.

SAMPLE OF USE OF וועלן 'WANT TO': MODEL MAIN VERB גיין 'GO'

present singular

I want to go איך וויל גיין
 You (familiar) want to go דו ווילסט גיין

You (formal) want to go איר חילט גיין
 He wants to go ער חיל גיין
 She wants to go זי חיל גיין
 People want to go / Everyone wants to go מ'חיל גיין

present plural

We want to go מיר חילן גיין
 You want to go איר חילט גיין
 They want to go זיי חילן גיין

past singular

I wanted to go [ikhob gəvólt géyn] גיין (N.E. var. נעמעלט)
 You (familiar) wanted to go [dust gəvólt géyn] גיין
 You (formal) wanted to go [irət gəvólt géyn] גיין
 He wanted to go [erət gəvólt géyn] גיין
 She wanted to go [ziət gəvólt géyn] גיין
 People/We wanted to go [mət gəvólt géyn] גיין

past plural

We wanted to go [mir nobm gəvólt géyn] גיין
 You wanted to go [irət gəvólt géyn] גיין
 They wanted to go [zey nobm gəvólt géyn] גיין

future singular

I will want to go [ikhl véln géyn] גיין
 You (familiar) will want to go [dust véln géyn] גיין
 You (formal) will want to go [irət véln géyn] גיין
 He will want to go [erət véln géyn] גיין

She will want to go [ziət véln géyn] זי וועט וועלן גיין

People will want to go [mət véln géyn] מ'וועט וועלן גיין

future plural

We will want to go [miln / mirn véln géyn] מיר וועלן וועלן גיין

You will want to go [irət véln géyn] איר וועט וועלן גיין

They will want to go [zein véln géyn] זיי וועלן וועלן גיין

9.1.7 Analytic verb former ווערן

ווערן 'become; be; get' is used with the past participle of the main verb to form a passive. In the present tense, the appropriately inflected part of ווערן 'become' precedes the verb. In the past and future it usually follows it. ווערן forms its past with זיין (→ §7.7). Note that a few deeply rooted constructions coexist in the modern language with corresponding synthetic verbs, e.g. ווערן אָנטלויפֿן = אָנטלויפֿן 'run away; escape'. Passives may also be formed using pronoun 'ח' (→ §6.1.6.2). Model verb is אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן 'become entangled / tied up in something; become involved'.

SAMPLE OF USE OF ווערן:

אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן 'BECOME INVOLVED'

present singular

I'm becoming involved איך ווער אַרײַנגעדרייט

You (familiar) are becoming involved דו ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

You (formal) are becoming involved איר ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

He is becoming involved ער ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

She is becoming involved זי ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

One becomes involved; It's easy to get entangled! מ'ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט

Go ahead and become involved! (familiar) (sarcastic) **ווער אַרײַנגעדרייט!**

Go ahead and become involved! (formal) (sarcastic) **ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט!**

present plural

We're becoming involved **מיר ווערן אַרײַנגעדרייט**

You're becoming involved **איר ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט**

They're becoming involved **זיי ווערן אַרײַנגעדרייט**

Go ahead and become involved! (sarcastic) **ווערט אַרײַנגעדרייט!**

past singular

I became involved **איך בין אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

You (familiar) became involved **דו ביסט אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

You (formal) became involved **איר זינט אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

He became involved **ער איז אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

She became involved **זי איז אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

People became involved; We became involved **מ'איז אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

past plural

We became involved **מיר זינען אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

You became involved **איר זינט אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

They became involved **זיי זינען אַרײַנגעדרייט געוואָרן**

future singular

I will become involved **איך וועל אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן**

You (familiar) will become involved **דו וועסט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן**

You (formal) will become involved **איר וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן**

He will become involved **ער וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן**

She will become involved **זי וועט אַרײַנגעדרייט ווערן**

מ'העט אַריינגעדרייט הערן (I'm warning you,) we'll become involved

future plural

We will become involved מיר העלן אַריינגעדרייט הערן
 You will become involved איר העט אַריינגעדרייט הערן
 They will become involved זיי העלן אַריינגעדרייט הערן

SAMPLE VERBS WITH הערן

fall asleep אָנטשלאָפֿן הערן
 be rescued; be saved גערעטעוועט הערן
 be fed up with (plus reflexive → §14.8) [nīmas] נמאָט הערן
 be impressed; admire [nispáts] נחמַעל הערן
 be / become confused צעמישט הערן

9.1.8 Analytic verb former זאָלן

זאָלן 'should; would; ought; let (...); may (...)' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It occurs far more frequently than English 'should' (which itself frequently corresponds with דאַרפֿן → §9.1.2). In numerous contexts זאָל corresponds with English use of the infinitive alone. Frequently, זאָל provides a subjunctive mood. The third person singular has no ט-, hence ער־זאָל 'he should'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF זאָלן

How should I know? וואָס זאָל איך הייסן?
 What should we do? וואָס זאָל מען טאָן? [vózi men tón]
 I told him to wait איך האָב אים [khóbm] געזאָגט ער זאָל האַרטן
 Let's have it your way (lit. 'Let it be like this') זאָל זיין אַזוי
 Let them yell! זאָלן זיי שרייען!

COMMON EXPRESSIONS WITH זאָלן

זאָל זיין אזוי

Let's have it your way (lit. 'Let it be like this')

זאָל זיין מיט מזל! [mazi]

Best of luck to you! (lit. 'It should be with luck!')

זאָל איך אזוי וויסן פֿון צרות [tsóras]

I have no idea (lit. 'So I should know of troubles')

מ'זאָל זיך נאָר טרעפֿן אויף שמחות [af símkhæs]

Let us meet only on happy occasions (said on sad occasions)

9.1.8.1 זאָלן as an alternative imperative

Second person use of זאָלן (lit. 'you should') is frequently used as an alternative to the grammatical imperative (→ §7.5). Imperative use of זאָלן frequently has a softer tone than the grammatical imperative, implying friendly advice rather than a command. Familiar second person pronoun דו is usually omitted and זאָלסט used on its own. When דו is retained the resulting mood is one of scolding or warning (as harsh or harsher than the grammatical imperative).

SAMPLES OF זאָלן AS AN ALTERNATIVE IMPERATIVE

זאָלסט קומען פֿרי! (familiar) Come early!

דו זאָלסט קומען פֿרי! (familiar) (I'm telling you,) come early!

זאָלסט ניט גיין! (familiar) Don't go!

דו זאָלסט ניט גיין! (I warn you,) don't go!

איר זאָלט זאָגן דעם אמת [émæs] Tell the truth! (formal)

9.1.9 Analytic verb former טאָן

טאָן 'do a' is often interchangeable with געבן (→ §9.1). It too designates the action as a single event, rather than an ongoing affair. Its present is formed with the present tense of irregular טאָן as helping verb plus indefinite article אַ plus stem. In the past, the participle געטאָן [gatón] usually follows the stem. In the future, the inflected part of futurizing וועלן must precede the אַ plus stem sequence, while the infinitive טאָן usually follows. Where both טאָן and געבן are used with the same verb, טאָן tends to have a loftier tone, געבן a more everyday tone. Thus, אַ קוש טאָן alone would be used in *מזוזה* [mezúza] 'kiss the מזוזה (traditional doorpost amulet) when entering or leaving a room'. אַ קוש געבן with reference to humans may denote a higher level of love than געבן which denotes only the act of kissing. There is also a grammatical difference. געבן takes dative without a preposition (i.e. the understood preposition → §5.1.3.1); טאָן does not. Cf. e.g. *די שוועסטער* vs. *אַ קוש געבן* and *די שוועסטער* vs. *אַ קוש טאָן* 'give one's sister a kiss'. There is no difference for masculine nouns, where both accusative and dative have דעם (→ §§ 5.3.2–5.3.3).

9.1.9.1 present singular of helping verb טאָן

I do / am doing איך טו

you (familiar) do / are doing דו טוטסט

you (formal) do / are doing איר טוט

he does / is doing ער טוט

she does / is doing זי טוט

people do / we do / one does מ'טוט

Do! (familiar) טו

Do! (formal) טוט

9.1.9.2 present plural of helping verb טאן

we do / are doing מיר טוען

you do / are doing איר טוט

they do / are doing זיי טוען

Do! טוט!

SAMPLE OF א קוק טאן: MODEL VERB

present singular

I'm having a look איך טו א קוק

You (familiar) are having a look דו טוטסט א קוק

You (formal) are having a look איר טוט א קוק

He is having a look ער טוט א קוק

She is having a look זי טוט א קוק

One has a look; You should have a look מ'טוט א קוק

Have a look (familiar)! טו א קוק!

Have a look (formal)! טוט א קוק!

present plural

We are having a look מיר טוען א קוק

You are having a look איר טוט א קוק

They are having a look זיי טוען א קוק

Have a look! טוט א קוק!

past singular

I had a look איך האָב א קוק געמאָן

You (familiar) had a look דו האָסט א קוק געמאָן

You (formal) had a look איר האָט א קוק געמאָן

He had a look ער האָט א קוק געמאָן

She had a look זי האָט אַ קוק געטאָן
 People had a look; We had a look מ'האָט אַ קוק געטאָן

past plural

We had a look מיר האָבן אַ קוק געטאָן
 You had a look איר האָט אַ קוק געטאָן
 They had a look זיי האָבן אַ קוק געטאָן

future singular

I will have a look [ikh/ khvel akúkton] איך וועל אַ קוק טאָן
 You (familiar) will have a look [du(ə)st akúkton] דו וועסט אַ קוק טאָן
 You (formal) will have a look [ir(ə)t akúkton] איר וועט אַ קוק טאָן
 He will have a look [er(ə)t akúkton] ער וועט אַ קוק טאָן
 She will have a look [zi(ə)t akúkton] זי וועט אַ קוק טאָן
 We will / People will have a look [mə(və)t akúkton] מ'וועט אַ קוק טאָן

future plural

We will have a look [miin / mirn a kúkton] מיר וועלן אַ קוק טאָן
 You will have a look [ir(ə)t a kúkton] איר וועט אַ קוק טאָן
 They will have a look [ze(y)ln a kúkton] זיי וועלן אַ קוק טאָן

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERBS WITH טאָן

say (quickly) אַ זאָג טאָן
 think over; have a think אַ טראַכט טאָן
 give a laugh אַ לאַך טאָן
 ask [a frékton] אַ פֿרעג טאָן
 give a scratch אַ קראַץ טאָן
 give a jump אַ שפּרונג טאָן

9.1.10 Analytic verb former **לֵאזֵן**

לֵאזֵן 'allow; let' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. In inverted word order (→ §§11.2, 14.4), the **ו** of suffix **וּ** (**וּ**) is frequently omitted, giving **לֵאזְנוּ**. Imperative **לֵאזְנוּ** followed by objective pronoun **חַיךְ** obligatorily conflates to **לֵאזְמַיךְ**, e.g. **לֵאזְמַיךְ צוּרוּ** 'Leave me alone'.

SAMPLES OF USE OF **לֵאזֵן**

Let me know (familiar) **לֵאזְנוּ חַיטְךְ**

Let me know (formal) **לֵאזְנוּ חַיטְךְ**

Why don't you (familiar) let them come? **פִּאָרְחָטְס לֵאזְנוּ זֵי נִיט קומען?**

Leave me alone / Stop harassing me (familiar) **לֵאזְנוּ אָפּוּ!**

Leave me alone / Stop harassing me (formal) **לֵאזְנוּ אָפּוּ!**

9.1.11 Analytic verb former **לֵאמִיר**

לֵאמִיר 'let's; let us' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It is exclusively a first person plural. Note, however, that growing usage has **לֵאמִיר** instead of **לֵאזְמַיךְ** (→ §9.1.10), e.g. **לֵאמִיר צוּרוּ** 'Leave me alone'.

SAMPLES OF USE OF **לֵאמִיר**

Come on, let's go (lit. 'Let's go already') **לֵאמִיר שוין גיין**

Let's answer **לֵאמִיר ענטפֿערן**

Let's not answer **לֵאמִיר נִיט ענטפֿערן**

9.1.12 Analytic verb former **מוזן**

מוזן 'must; be compelled to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It is often interchangeable with **דאַרפֿן** (→ §9.1.2) but can denote a stronger sense of necessity. The third person singular has no **ט**-, hence **מוז** 'ער־זי־א׳ט'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF **מוזן**

I really have to go **איך מוז טאַקע גיין**

חיר חוצן הינס האָבן אַן ענטפֿער We need to have an answer today

9.1.13 Analytic verb former מענן

מענן 'may' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It denotes that permission or moral authority is invoked for the action, rather than mere physical ability (cf. קענען → 9.1.16). Anomalous, the negative of מענן is the inflected part of טאָרן נישט, always used with נישט, giving נישט טאָרן 'may not'. The third person singular of both has no ם-, hence מעג ׳אָס and ער׳אָס ׳אָס. טאָר נישט.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF מענן AND טאָר נישט

אי מעג מען נוצן דעם גאָרטן? Are we allowed to use the garden?

טאָר מען נישט [חאָט סאָ] טאָר מען נישט It's not allowed on weekends

אָנטאַפֿן [אָנטאַפֿן] מעג מען? Is touching allowed?

9.1.14 Analytic verb former נעמען

נעמען 'take to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. It has the sense of 'about to start; just starting; get down to doing something'. The past participle of נעמען is גענומען. Where the infinitive functions as a noun (→ §4.1.3.3), or a true noun is the thing that is about to be started, the parallel construction נעמען זיך צו is used. It is followed by the definite article (appropriately in dative following צו) plus the noun.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF נעמען AND נעמען זיך צו

איך נעם שטודירן מוזיק I'm about to begin studying music

חיר האָבן גענומען אָנטלויפֿן We prepared to escape

איך נעם זיך צו דער אַרבעט I'm getting down to work

לאָמיר זיך נעמען צו דער היימאַרבעט Let's get down to the homework

9.1.15 Analytic verb former פֿלענען

פֿלענען 'used to' is used with the infinitive of the main verb to express the habitual past.

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF פֿלענען

I used to live over there איך פֿלענ דאָרטן האַוינען

We used to see each other often מיר פֿלענען זיך זען אָפֿט

It used to be different [sflegd zayn ándersh] ס'פֿלענט זיין אַנדערש

9.1.16 Analytic verb former קענען

קענען (var. קאָנען) 'can' is used with the infinitive of the main verb. The third person singular has no ס-, hence ער/זי/א'ס קען. The conjugation of analytic verb former קענען is identical to that of קענא 'know' (→ §15.4).

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF קענען

Can you do me a favour? קענסט מיר טאָן אַ טובֿה? [tócyt]

You never can tell מ'קען נישט חישן [makénit vísn]

I can't make it today הינט קען איך נישט קומען

9.2 INHERENTLY ANALYTIC VERBS

9.2.1 The inherently analytic verb with האָבן

In the present, the appropriate part of האָבן [hóbm] 'have' (→ §§7.6.1.1 – 7.6.1.2) must precede the main verb. In the past, the inflected part of האָבן also precedes the main verb but the past participle געהאַט may precede or follow the main verb; it usually follows. Analogously, in the future, the

inflected futurizing וועלן (→ §§791 - 792) must precede the main verb but infinitive האָבן may precede or follow the main verb, it usually follows. Note that one of the inherently analytic verbs with האָבן, פֿאַראַיבֿל [faríbl hobm] 'be offended; take something the wrong way' is the source of חרטה is חרטה קיין פֿאַראַיבֿל גיט! beg your pardon (formal)' Model verb is האָבן [kharóta hobm] 'change one's mind' (lit 'have regret / remorse').

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERB WITH האָבן:

'CHANGE ONE'S MIND'

present singular

I'm changing (/I've changed) my mind איך האָב חרטה

You're changing (/You've changed) your mind דו האָסט חרטה

You're changing (/You've changed) your mind (formal) איר האָט חרטה

He's changing (/He has changed) his mind ער האָט חרטה

She's changing (/She has changed) her mind זי האָט חרטה

People are changing (have changed) their minds מ'האָט חרטה

Change your mind! (familiar) האָב חרטה!

Change your mind! (plural) האָט חרטה!

present plural

We're changing (/We have changed) our minds מיר האָבן חרטה

You're changing (/You've changed) your minds איר האָט חרטה

They're changing (/They have changed) their minds זיי האָבן חרטה

Change your mind! האָט חרטה!

past singular

I changed my mind איך האָב חרטה געהאַט

You (informal) changed your mind דו האָסט חרטה געהאַט

You (formal) changed your mind איר האָט חרטה געהאַט

He changed his mind ער האָט חרטה געהאַט

She changed her mind זי האָט חרטה געהאַט

People changed their minds מ'האַט חרטה געהאַט

past plural

We changed our minds מיר האָבן חרטה געהאַט

You've changed your minds איר האָט חרטה געהאַט

They've changed their minds זיי האָבן חרטה געהאַט

future singular

I'll change my mind איך וועל חרטה האָבן

You (informal) will change your mind דו וועסט חרטה האָבן

You (formal) will change your mind איר וועט חרטה האָבן

He will change his mind ער וועט חרטה האָבן

She will change her mind זי וועט חרטה האָבן

People will change their minds מ'וועט חרטה האָבן

future plural

We will change our minds מיר וועלן חרטה האָבן

You will change your minds איר וועט חרטה האָבן

They will change their minds זיי וועלן חרטה האָבן

SAMPLES OF INHERENTLY ANALYTIC VERBS WITH האָבן

have pleasure [hanóə hobm] האָבן הנאה

be eager; be in the mood [khéyshək hobm] האָבן חשק

get married [khásənə hobm] האָבן חתונה

love, like strongly ליב האָבן (var. האָלט האָבן)

be afraid; fear (with פֿאַר) [móyrt hobm] מורא האָבן
hate פֿאַנט האָבן

9.2.2 The inherently analytic verb with זײַן

The analytic verb with זײַן 'be' produces hundreds of verbs. Many are restricted to a traditional learned style, but quite a few have widespread use. In the present tense, the appropriate part of זײַן (→ §§7.7.1 – 7.7.2) must precede the main verb. In the future, וועלן precedes the main verb and infinitive זײַן follows. In the past, the analytic verb with זײַן, alone in the standard language, uses a mixed conjugation comprising the inflected part of האָבן plus the past participle of זײַן (געווען [gəvén]), giving the characteristic 'געווען' conjugation of analytic verbs with זײַן. Model verb is זײַן מסכים [máskəm zayn / máskim zayn] 'agree'.

SAMPLE ANALYTIC VERB WITH זײַן: 'AGREE' מסכים זײַן

present singular

I agree איך בין מסכים

You (familiar) agree דו ביסט מסכים

You (formal) agree איר זינט מסכים

He agrees ער איז מסכים

She agrees זי איז מסכים

Everybody agrees / We agree מ'איז מסכים

Agree! (familiar) זיי מסכים!

Agree! (formal) זיינט מסכים!

present plural

We agree מיר זײַנען מסכים

You agree איר זײט מסכים
 They agree זיי זײנען מסכים
 Agree! זײט מסכים!

past singular

I agreed איך האָב מסכים געווען
 You (familiar) agreed דו האָסט מסכים געווען
 You (formal) agreed איר האָט מסכים געווען
 He agreed ער האָט מסכים געווען
 She agreed זי האָט מסכים געווען
 Everybody agreed / It was agreed מ'האָט מסכים געווען

past plural

We agreed מיר האָבן מסכים געווען
 You agreed איר האָט מסכים געווען
 They agreed זיי האָבן מסכים געווען

future singular

I will agree איך וועל מסכים זײן
 You (familiar) will agree דו וועסט מסכים זײן
 You (formal) will agree איר וועט מסכים זײן
 He will agree ער וועט מסכים זײן
 She will agree זי וועט מסכים זײן
 Everybody will agree / We will agree מ'וועט מסכים זײן

future plural

We will agree מיר וועלן מסכים זײן
 You will agree איר וועט מסכים זײן

זיי וועלן מסכים זיין They will agree

SAMPLES OF ANALYTIC VERBS WITH זיין (PAST TENSE WITH האָבן)

- suspect [khóyshəd zayn] זיין אויסר
 distinguish; differentiate [máfkhn zayn] זיין מ'פ'הין
 concede (a point); confess [móyde zayn] זיין מודה
 trouble somebody for a favour [mátriəkh zayn] זיין מטריח
 take the trouble to do somebody a favour (און) זיין זיך (און)
 offer hospitality [= food/drinks]; treat [to] [məkhábəd zayn] זיין מ'כ'בד
 continue [mámshəkh zayn] זיין מחשיך
 agree [máskim zayn] זיין מסכים
 succeed [mátšliəkh zayn] זיין מצליח
 receive / welcome [guest] [məkabl pónim zayn] זיין מקבל פנים
 presume / assume [məsháər zayn] זיין (זיך) משער
 sacrifice; give up [mákriv zayn] זיין מקריב

9.2.2.1 Passives of the analytic verb with זיין

A few analytic verbs with זיין have passives using ווערן (→ §9.1.7).

SAMPLES OF ANALYTIC VERBS WITH זיין WITH PASSIVES

- rescue [mátsl] 'rescue' → זיין ניצול ווערן [nítsl vern] 'be rescued'
 fulfil [məkáyəm] 'fulfil' → זיין מקיים ווערן [məkúyəm vern] 'be fulfilled'

10 ADVERBS

10.0 OVERVIEW

Adverbs modify, specify or elaborate on verbs or the state and time in which the verb action occurs. Where they occur in the middle of a phrase, adverbs follow the inflected verb. Thus, adverb אַפֿשֶׁר [éfshər] 'perhaps' follows the part of קומען 'come' inflected for third person singular in ער קומט אַפֿשֶׁר 'He may come'. Adverbs usually precede uninflected verbs (i.e., infinitive and past participle), hence ער וועט אַפֿשֶׁר קומען. There are however occasions where the adverb may follow the uninflected verb for emphasis (→ §14.10), e.g. ער וועט קומען אַפֿשֶׁר. Adverbs may generally be used to begin a sentence. There are four major types of adverbs: true adverbs (§10.1); adverbs from adjectives and nouns (§10.2); relic adverbs (§10.3); adverbs from prepositional phrases (§10.4). Some adverbs have diminutives (§10.5). Psychoadverbial inserts are phrases inserted into a sentence that serve to betray the speaker's true emotional disposition toward the object of speech or writing (§10.6)

10.1 TRUE ADVERBS

True adverbs are not derived from any other part of speech. They have no comparative or superlative.

SAMPLES OF TRUE ADVERBS

now איצטער (var. איצט, אַצינד, איצטערט; nonliterary var. י'עצט)

once; someday [amól] אַמאָל

maybe [éíshər] אַפֿשׂר

soon; soon after באַלד

(deliberately) illogically; necessarily; exclusively [dáfak] דאָפאק

then (יעמאָלט, דאָן, דענטסטמאָל, דאָמאָלט (ט) (var. דעמאָלט

really; in point of fact טאַקע

really; in full; no kidding [máməsh] מאַמש

suddenly (פּלוצעם, פּלוצלינג (var. פּלוצלונג

early פֿרי

earlier פֿריער

barely; just [kam] קוים

already שוין

late שפּעט

later שפּעטער

10.2 ADVERBS FROM ADJECTIVES AND NOUNS

New adverbs arise continually from adjectives and nouns by way of the following productive mechanisms.

10.2.1 Adverbs from adjective stems

Most adjective stems can double as adverbs. Unlike true adverbs, they may attract comparative suffix *ער*- just as adjectives do (→ §5.10).

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS FROM ADJECTIVE STEMS

preferably בעסטער

well נאָך בעסטער (better: בעסטער; better still: נאָך בעסטער) נוט

quickly נִיךְ (more quickly: נִילעך)
 slowly נאָמעלעכער (more slowly: מער נאָמעלעכער)
 calmly רואיק [אַרום] (more calmly: מער רואיק)
 quietly שטיל (more quietly: מער שטיל)
 badly שלעכט (worse: ווערער)

10.2.2 Adverbs from adjective stem plus ערהײט

Adjectives may be adverbialized by suffixation of ערהײט [ərhéyt] to the adjective stem. Most frequently, the ערהײט- adverbs denote a general state of being rather than modifying a verb as directly as true adverbs (→ §10.1) and adverbs from adjective stems (→ §10.2.1). נעזונטערהײט [gezuntərhéyt] 'in good health' is used with imperatives in the idiomatic sense of 'Enjoy (...)', e.g. עס נעזונטערהײט 'Eat in good health' (= 'Bon appétit' or 'No need to feel bashful'). נעזונטערהײט is also used ironically in the sense of 'Go ahead and (...) (but don't blame me)', e.g. נאָ נעזונטערהײט 'Well if you want to go, then go, but don't blame me!'. ערהײט- may also be suffixed to present participles of verbs (→ §7.2), e.g. גייענדיק 'while going' → גייענדיקערהײט [gèyendikərhéyt], 'while standing' → שטייענדיק [shtèyendikərhéyt]. The ערהײט- forms are more forceful.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH SUFFIX ערהײט

angrily; while in an angry mood [òngəbroygəstərhéyt] אָנגעברונזטערהײט
 carefully; cautiously [òpgəhitərhéyt] אָפּגעהיטערהײט
 while / when young [yùngərhéyt] יונגערהײט
 while / when wet [nàsərhéyt] נאַטערהײט
 without having been invited [nìtʔarbetnərhéyt] נישט-אַרבעטנערהײט
 while / when ill [krànkərhéyt] קראַנקערהײט
 quietly [shtilərhéyt] שטילערהײט

10.2.3 Adverbs from nouns by suffixation of חַיִּי-

Nouns may be adverbialized by suffixation of חַיִּי-. It is often the plural of the noun that serves as the base of the adverb. Frequently, the חַיִּי- adverbs are partitive, denoting a delimitation of period of time, or a conceptual division into subparts.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS FROM NOUNS WITH SUFFIX חַיִּי-

one by one; one at a time [éyntsigvayz] איינציקחַיִּי

before marriage (m.) [bókħərvayz] בּוֹדֵר־חַיִּי

slowly [bísliaghvayz] בִּיטל־עֲחַיִּי

youthfully (m.); as a boy יונגל־חַיִּי

in great numbers; in droves; massively מַעֲסָנ־חַיִּי

before marriage (f.); youthfully (f.); as a girl חַיִּי־לִידֵל

in pairs; by the couple; two by two מַעֲרֵל־עֲחַיִּי

at times צײַט־נֶחֱמַיִי

10.3 RELIC ADVERBS

Relic adverbs are not 'relic' because of numerical scarcity. On the contrary, they are amply represented. The classification denotes rather that the relevant prefixes and suffixes are, generally speaking, no longer productive in the modern language. They cannot be used at will to create new adverbs.

10.3.1 Prefix -מִ

In addition to its function as a relic adverbial prefix used with a number of common adverbs, prefix מִ- is used systematically for telling time, e.g. —

מִאַיִנס 'one o'clock', מִצְוִינער 'two o'clock' etc. (→ §13.2.2).

SAMPLES OF RELIC ADVERBS WITH PREFIX -אָ

certainly; of course [avádə] אַוואַדאי

like this; so אַזוי

in short [akíái] אַכילאי (cf. כלל (דער) 'rule; generalization')

apparently [apónim] אָפּאָנים (cf. פנים (דאָס) 'face')

all the more obvious [apshítə] אָפּשטאַטאָ

beforehand [afríər] אָפּרייער

in short; to sum up; to get right to the point [ak(tsər)] אַקיצור

for example אַשטײַגער (cf. דער) 'manner; kind of')

10.3.2 Prefix -אָ

Prefix -אָ plus superlative adjective plus suffix ן- forms an adverbial superlative. Alternatively, these may be formed via preposition צו (→ §10.4.1).

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX -אָ

most preferably; at (his/her/its) best אָמבעסטן

most undesirably; at (his/her/its) worst אָמערנסטן

most beautifully; at (his/her/its) most beautiful אָמשענסטן

10.3.3 Prefix -דער

-דער (often pronounced [da]) combines with a number of prepositions to form an adverb. Prefix -דער is unstressed. The preposition is stressed. A number of the -דער plus preposition adverbs have parallel forms comprising the preposition plus the dative article דעם, which /s stressed, e.g. דערנאָך [danókh /dernókh] 'afterwards' = נאָך דעם [noghdém]. There are, however, instances where the meanings of the two constructions do not

converge, e.g. דערפאר [dafár/derfár] therefore vs. פֿאַר דעם [far dém] 'before that'.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX דער-

present; nearby; [dabáy/derbáy] דערביי

in the vicinity [dálebm/derlébm] דערלעבן

afterwards [danókh/dernokh] (נאָך דעם [nognóém] -) דערנאָך

therefore [dafár/derfár] דערפאר

of it; from this; therefrom; hereof [dafún/derfún] (פֿון דעם -) דערפֿון

in addition; moreover; on top of everything else [datsú/dertsú] דערצו

on the other hand; against it [dakégn/derkégn] (קעגן דעם -) דערקעגן

10.3.4 Prefix ב-

ב- [bə] occurs naturally only within the Semitic component.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX ב-

somewhat drunk [bəgilúfn] בגילופין

retrospectively; after the fact; it now being too late [bədióvə] בדיעבד

(if you) forgive me for saying so [bəm(ə)khíla] במחילה

anyway; in any case [bəməyʔə] במילא

explicitly; specially [bəféyresh] בפירוש

publicly; openly [bəféryə] בפרהסיא

10.3.5 Prefix כ-

Like ב-, כ- [kə] occurs naturally only within the Semitic component. Most words with prefix כ- are used in a learned style.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX כ-

as agreed [kəfihamdúber] כפיהמדיבור

extremely difficult [kəkriəs yám suf] כְּקִרְיַעַת יַם־סוּף

(lit. 'like the parting of the Red Sea')

understood literally [kəpshútoy] כְּפִשּׁוּטוֹ

according to plan; in good order [kəshúra] כְּסוּדָה

10.3.6 Prefix ל-

Like -ב, and כ, -ל [lə] occurs naturally only within the Semitic component.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH PREFIX ל-

after the fact; too late [l(ə)akheramáysə] לאחר־המעשה

at first; in the first instance; initially [ləkhatkhúla] לְכַתְחִילָה

for example [ləmóshi] לְמֹשֶׁל

at the present time [ləsáta] לְעַתָּה

10.3.7 Suffix ו-

The only systematic use of adverbial suffix ו- is in the numeric adverbs ערשטנס 'firstly', צווייטנס 'secondly' etc. (→ §12.2.2). The remaining surviving items generally have to do with time, space or direction. In some, suffix ו- is optional.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH SUFFIX ו-

Friday evening (eve of Sabbath) [fráytk tsə nákht(s)] פֿרִיַטִּיק־צוֹנאַכט(ס)

Saturday night [shàbəs tsu nákht(s)] שַׁבָּת־צוֹנאַכט(ס)

Saturday night (var.) [sh(a)béysə nakht(s)] שַׁבָּתַע נאַכט(ס) (→ §13.3.2.1)

the next day; on the morrow צוֹמאָרגנס

on the way [ahínveks] אָהינװעגס

on the way; en route [untərvégns] אונטערװעגנס

at least צװײקסטנס

mostly מערסטנס

from far; looking at a distance [ʔundərváytnz] פֿונדעררווייטנס

on the way back; while returning [tsuríkevz] צוריקקענס

(to the) left לינקס

(to the) right רעכטס

10.3.6 Suffix ן-

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS WITH SUFFIX ן-

in the near future אין ניכֿן (also spelled אינגיכֿן)

during the week (days) אינדערואָכן

last week פֿאַראַכטאָגן (cf. איבעראַכטאָג 'next week')

last year פֿאַראַיאָרן (cf. איבעראַיאָר 'next year')

totally; altogether אין גאַנצן (also spelled אינגאַנצן)

truthfully (אויף אַן אמת [afanéməs] =) אין דער אמתֿן [indərémasn]

nevertheless פֿונדעסטוועגן [ʔundéstvegn]

10.4 ADVERBS FROM PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

A prepositional phrase is a preposition plus the noun phrase that is its object. At a higher level than the sum of its parts, a prepositional phrase can function as an adverb in the syntax of the language (→ §14.4.1). Some modern adverbs derive historically from prepositional phrases (e.g. from the classical Hebrew prefixed prepositions -ב, -כ and -ל → §§10.3.4 – 10.3.6; from prepositional phrases with relic suffix ן- → §10.3.6). Many others derive from modern prepositions that double as adverb formers. Prepositional phrases tend to become fully adverbialized when they acquire

'stock phrase' status by regular use.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS FROM PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

to be spiteful; as a provocation [aftselókhes] אויף צו להלעניס

to a certain extent אין א געוויסער מאָס

at home אין דער היים

after that [nogh dém] דעם נאָך (also spelled נאָכדעם)

before that דעם פֿאַר

on one hand פֿון איין זייט

on the other hand פֿון דער אנדערער זייט

from nearby פֿון דער נאָענט

after all נאָך אַלעמען

10.4.1 Superlative adverbs from preposition צו

Preposition צו plus definite article דעם (conflating obligatorily to צום) plus adjective with superlative ending -סט plus suffix -ן forms an adverbial superlative. Some adverbial superlatives with צו have alternate forms with the far less frequent -מאָ (→ §10.3.2).

SAMPLES OF ADVERBIAL SUPERLATIVES WITH צום

first of all צום אַלעם ערשטן

most easily צום גרינגסטן

at least צום חייניקסטן \ חייניקסטן

most difficult of all צום שווערסטן

at the very latest צום שפעטסטן

10.4.2 'For the sake of' constructions from preposition פֿון

Preposition פֿון plus possessive pronoun or proper name plus וועגן

corresponds with 'for the sake / benefit of; as far as — is concerned'. Where a possessive pronoun is used, it is suffixed by **ט**- (optionally **עט**- for some). Proper names and other human nouns have possessive **ט**-.

singular

for my sake פֿון מיין(ע)ט העגן

for your (familiar) sake פֿון דיין(ע)ט העגן

for your (formal) sake פֿון אייערעט העגן

for his sake פֿון זיין(ע)ט העגן

for her sake פֿון איר(ע)ט העגן

plural

for our sake פֿון אונדזערעט העגן

for your sake פֿון אייערעט העגן

for their sake פֿון זייערעט העגן

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF פֿון — העגן

זי אַזוי גוט, סױ עס פֿון מיין העגן

Please, do it for my sake

פֿון מיין העגן קענסטו גיין אַפֿילו [אַפֿילו] היינט

As far as I'm concerned, you can even go today

לאַמיר בלייבן [בלײַבן] פֿון לייעזערעט העגן

Let's stay for Léyzər's sake

10.5 DIMINUTIVES OF ADVERBS

Monosyllabic adverbs may be diminutivized by suffixing **לעך**- ([ləkh] or [lakh]) to the adverb stem. There are no internal vowel shifts. The

diminutivized adverb is pronounced slowly in falsetto. It is often accompanied by side-to-side movement of the head, horizontal movement of the hands and fingers up to 180°, and a slight smile. Cf. §5.13.1 on diminutives of adjectives.

SAMPLES OF DIMINUTIVES OF ADVERBS

- נילעך 'quite fast (but not at top speed!)' (from גיך 'fast')
 פֿרילעך 'sort of early (but not too early!)' (from פֿרי 'early')
 קלוגלעך 'quite cleverly (but not exactly brilliantly!)' (from קלוג 'clever')
 שיינלעך 'quite prettily (but not exactly beautifully!)' (from שײן 'beautiful')
 שפעטלעך 'sort of late (but not too late!)' (from שפעט 'late')

10.6 PSYCHOADVERBIAL INSERTS

Psychoadverbial inserts are parenthetic interpolations in a sentence. They are uttered rapidly with clipped intonation (i.e. surrounded by split-second pauses, marked here by |). They serve to betray to the listener the speaker's attitude toward whatever it is he or she is speaking about. Virtually all can be used as self-contained sentences (i.e. interjections) in reply to a situation described by the interlocutor. Many psychoadverbial inserts may be used ironically. The following list represents a modest sampling.

10.6.1 אין אַ מזלדיקער שעה [inamázdikəshó]

gloss: with my best wishes; all being well (lit. 'in a lucky hour')

attitude: friendly hope for a positive outcome

sample: מיר העלן רעדן העגן דעם העגן דו העסט אין אַ

חזלדיקער שעה אָנקומען

transcription: [miln/mirn rédn vegn dem az du vest |inamázldikəshó|
ónkumən]

translation: We'll talk about it when you (all being well!) arrive. *or:*
We'll talk about it when you return. Have a good
journey back!

10.6.1.1 Use of אין אַ חזלדיקער שעה as reply

use as reply: — איך פֿאַר דינסטיק I'm leaving on Tuesday.
אין אַ חזלדיקער שעה Every success!; Bon voyage!

10.6.1.2 Ironical use of אין אַ חזלדיקער שעה

ironic use: hope for positive outcome of a perceived stupidity

sample: דו חילסט אין אַ חזלדיקער שעה אַראָפּשפּרינגען פֿון
דאַך?

transcription: [du vilst |inamázldikəshó| arópshpringən fun dákh?]

translation: Do you want to jump off the roof? Well, have
fun!

10.6.1.3 Ironical use of אין אַ חזלדיקער שעה as reply

use as reply: — איך שפּרינג אַראָפּ פֿון דאַך I'm jumping off the
roof.

אין אַ חזלדיקער שעה Well, go ahead! Don't come
crying to me!

10.6.2 אַט ירצה השם [mirtsəshèm / mirtsəshém]

gloss: hopefully (lit. 'if God wills it; God willing')

attitude:	looking forward to something
sample:	איך חעל קומען אם ירצה השם מאָרן
transcription:	[khvei kúmen mìrtsashém mórgn]
translation:	I look forward to coming tomorrow.

10.6.2.1 Use of אם ירצה השם as reply

use as reply:	קומסט דאָנערשטיק? You're coming on Thursday? אם ירצה השם I certainly hope so; Yes, of course!
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10.6.3 במחילה [bim(ə)khílə]

gloss:	asking you to forgive me (for saying something potentially offensive, embarrassing, vulgar or unkind).
attitude:	aggressive state of mind toward interlocutor
sample:	דינע קליידער זעען אויס במחילה אַ ביסל לעכערלעך
transcription:	[daynə kléyder zeen óys bəmekhílə a bisl lekherlek]
translation:	Your clothes, if you forgive me for saying so, do look a bit ridiculous.

10.6.3.1 Ironical use of במחילה

ironic use:	mitigating an insult by apologizing for it in the same sentence
sample:	דו ביסט במחילה אַן אידיוט
transcription:	[du bist bəmekhílə anidyót]
translation:	Do forgive me for saying so, but you are an idiot.

10.6.4 גאָט צו דאַנקען [gotsədánkən]

gloss:	thank God
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attitude:	happiness at the way something has turned out
sample:	איך בין שוין גאט צו דאָנקען אַדורך דעם עקזאַמען
transcription:	[khdin shoyn gotsədánkən adúrkh dem ekzámen]
translation:	Thank God, I've passed the examination or I'm thrilled that I passed the examination

10.6.4.1 Use of גאט צו דאָנקען as reply

use as reply:	— ט'איז געווען אַ דערפֿאַלג — It was a success. גאט צו דאָנקען [gót tsə dánkən] Thank God!
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10.6.5 חלילא [kholifá]

gloss:	Heaven forfend; God forbid
attitude:	fear of worst scenario
sample:	קענסט חלילא אַרופֿפֿאַלן
transcription:	[kénst kholifá arópfain]
translation:	You may (God forbid) fall down.

10.6.5.1 Use of חלילא as reply

use as reply:	ביסט אויף [af] מיר אין כעס? [ka(ə)s] Are you angry with me? חלילא Of course not!; God forbid!
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10.6.5.2 Ironical use 1 of חלילא

ironic use 1:	'fear' that something will turn out well
sample:	קום ניט, קענסט חלילא גוט פֿאַברענגען
transcription:	[kúm nit, kénst kholifá gut farbréyngən]
translation:	Don't come, you might (God forbid) have a good time.

10.6.5.3 Ironical use 1 of חלילא as reply

use as reply: ער חיל ניט פֿאַרן אויף חאַקאַציע? He doesn't want to go on vacation?
 חלילא! No way!; God forbid!; How stupid of him!

10.6.5.4 Ironical use 2 of חלילא

ironic use 2: satiric denial of something obviously correct
 sample: איך האָב געזאָגט אַז ער איז חלילא אַ ליגנער? [ikhə gəzókʰt az er iz |kholifə| a lígnər?]
 transcription:
 translation: I said that he is (God forbid) a liar.

10.6.5.5 Ironical use 2 of חלילא as reply

use as reply: זיי נעפֿעלן דיר ניט, אמת? You don't like them, right?
 חלילא! God forbid. When did I say that?

10.6.6 להבדיל [ləhəvdi]

gloss: though one shouldn't mention them in the same breath
 (lit. 'to differentiate [between sacred and profane]', i.e. 'not to say I don't differentiate although I mention them together')

attitude: contempt for one of the two things or persons mentioned

sample: דיין פֿרײַנד און להבדיל זײַן ברודער זעלן זײַן דאָרטן
 transcription: [dayn fraynt un |ləhəvdi| zayn bruder vein zayn dórtn]
 translation: Your friend and his brother (whom I can't stand) will be there.

10.6.6.1 Use of להבדיל as reply

- use as reply: דיין פֿרײַנד און זײַן ברודער וועלן זײַן דאָרטן?
 Will your friend and his brother be there?
 להבדילו
 Please don't mention them in the same breath.

10.6.7 נעבעך [nébakh]

- gloss: sadly; pitifully; alas.
 attitude: genuine sorrow for an unfortunate person
 sample: דער זיידע איז נעבעך קראַנק
 transcription: [der zéyde iz |nébakh| kránk]
 translation: Grandfather is sadly ill.

10.6.7.1 Use of נעבעך as reply

- use as reply: — דער זיידע איז קראַנק געוואָרן — Grandfather has become ill.
 נעבעך How very sad.

10.6.7.2 Ironical use of נעבעך

- ironic use: feigned sympathy for somebody who is in fact very well off; pointing out caustically that too much is being made of a trifle
 sample: ער האָט נעבעך קיין געלט נישט
 transcription: [erót |nébakh| kin gélt nit]
 translation: (e.g. of a millionaire): He has no money! How very sad!

10.6.7.3 Ironical use of נעבעך as reply

- use as reply: — איך האָב פֿאַרלוירן מײַן פען — I've lost my pen.

געבערן [néébaakh (with extra lengthening)] Big
tragedy! How awful!

10.6.8 פֿאַר קיינעם נישט געדאַכט [farkéynəmni(t)gədákht]

gloss: it shouldn't happen to anybody

attitude: sorrow or shock over a calamity

sample: מ'האַט אים פֿאַר קיינעם נישט געדאַכט איבערנעפֿאַרן

transcription: [məhòtəm farkéynəmnigədákht] (bərgəforn)

translation: He was (it shouldn't happen to anybody) run over.

10.6.8.1 Use of פֿאַר קיינעם נישט געדאַכט as reply

use as reply: זיי זינען זייער קראַנק — They are very ill
פֿאַר קיינעם נישט געדאַכט! How dreadful! Oh my
God!

10.6.9 קיין עין-הרע [kinaynhóřə / kinəhóřə]

gloss: no evil eye!; not to provoke the attention of 'the evil eye' by praising the good news too much (cf. 'knock on wood!')

attitude: gratification or pride concerning good news or an achievement

sample: די טאָכטער האָט קיין עין-הרע חתונה געהאַט

transcription: [di tókhtər hot kinaynhóřə] khásənə gəhat]

translation: My daughter got married. I'm thrilled.

10.6.9.1 Use of קיין עין-הרע as reply

use as reply: די טאָכטער האָט חתונה געהאַט —
קיין עין-הרע! [kɪn àyn hóřə] Fantastic!

11 QUESTIONS

11.0 OVERVIEW

Questions can be formed from declarative sentences by change in intonation alone (§11.1). Explicitly structured questions are formed by inversion of subject and predicate (§11.2) or by combining inversion with an interrogative word (§11.3). Interrogative additives serve to add emotional force to questions (§11.4).

11.1 INTONATION

Declarative sentences may be turned into questions by the characteristic rising intonation at the end, marked in written usage by a question mark (?).

SAMPLES OF QUESTIONS VIA INTONATION ALONE

You're coming tomorrow דו קומסט מװערן →

Are you coming tomorrow? דו קומסט מװערן?

They really know זיי הייסן טאַקע →

Do they really know? זיי הייסן טאַקע?

It's true [éməs] ס'איז אמת →

Is it true? ס'איז אמת?

11.1.1 Sarcastic intonation questions

When a declarative sentence righteously purporting to state a mere fact is 'overquestionized' by invoking a rise-fall intonation pattern, it becomes a

harshly satiric attack.

SAMPLES OF SARCASTIC INTONATION QUESTIONS

He's a doctor → ער איז א דאָקטער

You call him a doctor!? ער איז א דאָקטער?

It's summer in Oxford → ס'איז זומער אין אָקספּאָרד

You call this summer in Oxford? ס'איז זומער אין אָקספּאָרד?

We're experts → מיר זיינען עקספּערטן

You think we're experts? מיר זיינען עקספּערטן?

11.1.1.1 Use of דען in sarcastic intonation questions

The use of 'doubtful דען' explicitly marks doubt or satire in sarcastic intonation questions. It is inserted immediately after the inflected verb, e.g. 'You call him a doctor!?' ער איז דען א דאָקטער?

11.2 INVERSION

Questions may be formed by inversion of subject and predicate. The predicate consists of the inflected verb. Thus, 'You are coming tomorrow?' → קומסט מוֹרְנָן? 'Are you coming tomorrow?'. When inversion results in the sequence of second person familiar verb ending *סט* + pronoun *ו*, the two are obligatorily conflated to ending *סטו*- (or, less formally, to *סט*-) which is suffixed to the verb. The ending *סטו*- is usually pronounced [stə] or [st], unless stressed for contrast.

SAMPLES OF QUESTIONS BY INVERSION

Are you (formal) telling the truth? [éməs] זאגסט איר דעם אמת?

Are you (familiar) coming home? קוּחַסְטוּ אַהײַם?

Do you (familiar) want to see? חילסטו זען?

Do they really want things to be different? ווילן זיי טאַקע אַנדערש?

Is the answer known? מ'חייט דעם ענטפֿער?

11.3 INTERROGATIVE PLUS INVERSION

Interrogatives are explicit 'question words'. They automatically trigger inversion of subject and predicate (→ §§14.4 – 14.5).

11.3.1 Interrogatives

The interrogatives, most of which double as relative pronouns, are on the whole uninflecting.

INTERROGATIVES

where וואו (→ locative וואוהײַן 'where to; whither')

what וואָס

what kind of / what type of וואָסער (→ pl. וואָסערע)

what kind of a(n) (often aggressive) וואָס פֿאַר אַן

how (אָזוי) ווי

how much / how many וויפֿיל (-)

who ווער (→ object [vémə] 'whom')

whose [vémənz] וועמענס

when ווען

for what reason (lit. 'because of what') [makhməzvós] וואָס מַחמַצְוֹס

why וואָס פֿאַר (also spelled וואָס)

for whom וואָס וועמען

for what reason (lit. 'because of what') [tsəlìbyós] חָלִיב חָאָט
is / are; does / do (in a yes or no question) צי

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF INTERROGATIVES

Where are you? [vu bístə?] חָאָט בִּיסטוּ?

Where are we going? / Where shall we go? חָאָט בִּיסטוּ מֵעַן?

What are you thinking? חָאָט טראַכטסטוּ?

What kind of machine is this? חָאָט מַאָשִׁין אִיז דאָס?

What kind of friend is that? חָאָט פֿרֵיַנד [fraynt] אִיז דאָס?

How do you (familiar) do it? [viazóy mákhstə dos?] חָאָט מַאָכסטוּ דאָס?

How many books do you (formal) have? חָאָט בִּיכער האָט איר?

Who's coming? חָאָט קומט?

Whom can you (formal) recommend? חָאָט רעקאָמענדירן?

Whose house is this? חָאָט וויז אִיז דאָס?

When do we see each other? [vén zétmənzhəkh?] חָאָט מֵעַן זִיך?

Why don't you say yes? [farvóz zòkstnit 'fóy] חָאָט זאָגסטוּ נִיט יאָ?

For whom do you work? חָאָט פֿאַר וועמען אַרבעטסטוּ?

Why don't they answer? חָאָט ענטפֿערן זיי נִיט?

Are you (familiar) coming tomorrow? חָאָט קומסטוּ מָאַרנן?

11.3.1.1 Inflecting interrogative חֵלְעֵר

'which' inflects for case, gender and number. The older separate neutral form חֵלְעֵט can occasionally be encountered in the written language but it is rare in modern usage. Neutral usually aligns with feminine in nominative and with masculine in both objective cases.

חֵלְעֵר in nominative

which (masculine) חֵלְעֵר

which (feminine) חֵלְעֵט

וועלכע (neutral) which

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF וועלכער IN NOMINATIVE

וועלכער מאַנטל איז דאָס? Which coat (דער מאַנטל) is this?

וועלכע שיף איז דאָס? Which ship (די שיף) is this?

וועלכע הויז איז דאָס? Which house (דאָס הויז) is this?

וועלכער in accusative

וועלכן → וועלכער (masculine) which

וועלכע (feminine) which

וועלכן → וועלכע (neutral) which

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF וועלכער IN ACCUSATIVE

וועלכן מאַנטל זעסטו? Which coat do you see?

וועלכע שיף זעסטו? Which ship do you see?

וועלכן הויז זעסטו? Which house do you see?

וועלכער in dative

וועלכן → וועלכער (masculine) which

וועלכער → וועלכע (feminine) which

וועלכן → וועלכע (neutral) which

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF וועלכער IN DATIVE

פֿון וועלכן מאַנטל רעדסטו? Of which coat are you speaking?

מיט וועלכער שיף קומסטו? On which boat are you coming?

לעבן וועלכן הויז וועסטו שטיין? Near which house will you stand?

plural

וועלכע

SAMPLES OF THE USE OF PLURAL העלכע

Which ones do you have in mind? העלכע האָסטו אין זינען?

Which ones are you talking about? וועגן העלכע רעדסטו?

11.4 INTERROGATIVE ADDITIVES

The interrogative additives are טאָ and זשע. Their use parallels that of imperative additives טאָ and זשע (→ §7.5.6). טאָ [tə / to] immediately precedes the interrogative and זשע [zhə] immediately follows it. They can be used independently of each other or they may surround the interrogative for increased effect. Like their imperative counterparts, the interrogative additives טאָ and זשע may serve to invoke affection, love or familiarity in support of a request or demand for an answer to the question being asked. They may also have the force of 'then; so; in that case'. Interrogative טאָ and זשע also add forcefulness, seriousness, and occasionally annoyance, to the question. Their use is most frequent with וואָס 'what', פאַרוואָס 'why' and (אַזוי) ווי 'how'. Like their imperative counterparts, they may invoke feelings of guilt in support of the question or request laced with the additive.

SAMPLES OF INTERROGATIVE ADDITIVES טאָ and זשע

So why don't you tell me? טאָ פאַרוואָס זאָגסטו מיר ניט?

Come on, why don't you tell me? פאַרוואָס זשע זאָגסטו מיר ניט?

טאָ פאַרוואָס זאָגסטו מיר ניט?

Come on then, why don't you tell me? (You owe it to me!)

12 NUMBERS

12.0 OVERVIEW

Alongside the international number system, used in everyday life, Yiddish retains the traditional Jewish alphabetic numbering system for culture-specific purposes.

12.1 CARDINAL NUMBERS

12.1.1 Basic cardinal numbers

1	אײנס
2	צוויי
3	דריי
4	פֿיר
5	פֿינף
6	זעקס
7	זיבן [zibm]
8	אַכט
9	נײַן
10	צען
11	עלף
12	צוועלף
13	דרייצן

14	פֿערצן
15	פֿופֿצן
16	זעכצן
17	זיבעצן
18	אַכצן
19	נײַנצן
20	צוואַנציק
30	דרייַסיק
40	פֿערציק
50	פֿופֿציק
60	זעכציק
70	זיבעציק
80	אַכציק
90	נײַנציק
100	הונדערט
1,000	טויזנט
1,000,000	מיליאָן

12.1.1.1 אײַן and אײַנס

אײַנס is used for the number 'one' in isolation when counting and in clock time (→ §13.2.2). When used as an attributive adjective, and in double digit combinations (→ §12.1.2.1), אײַן occurs, e.g. מאַן אײַן 'one man', פֿרוי אײַן 'one woman'. אײַן does not inflect as an attributive adjective. As a predicative adjective (→ §5.7), אײַן inflects for gender, e.g. גאָט איז אײַנער 'God is one' (name of the Yiddish variant of a Passover song). In usage parallel to the possessive-indefinite construction (→ §6.2.1.5), אײַנער combines with indefinite article (אַן), e.g. אַ מאַן אײַנער 'some fellow', אַ פֿרוי אײַנער 'some woman'. אײַנער with the indefinite article inflects for case and gender, e.g.

טויזנט הונדערט זיבן און זעכציק
1,167[tóyznt | hundərt zibmən zékhtsik]

צען טויזנט, פֿיר הונדערט אַיין און זיבעציק 10,471
[tsén tóyznt | ír hundərt eynen zíbetsik]

אַכט הונדערט אַכט טויזנט, אַכט הונדערט נאָן און אַכציק 808,889
[ákht hundərt ákht tóyznt | ákht hundərt nàynən ákhtsik]

12.2 ORDINAL NUMBERS

There are special ordinal forms for '1st' to '19th', all ending in **ט**-, to which usual adjective endings are suffixed. For '20th' to '100th' and in '1000th', a **ט** appears between the number (which has the same stem as both cardinal and ordinal) and the adjective ending. In higher numbers, it is the very last number in the sequence that determines the suffix – if it is between 20 and 100, or ends in the word 'thousand', **ט** appears. Note the anomalous **ערשט** for 'first'.

12.2.1 Basic ordinal numbers

first	ערשט
second	צווייט
third	דריט
fourth	פֿערט
	פֿינפֿט
sixth	זעקסט
seventh	זיבעט

אָכט eighth

ניינט ninth

צענט tenth

עלפֿט eleventh

צוועלפֿט twelfth

thirteenth דרייצנט (var. דרייצעט)

fourteenth פֿערצנט (var. פֿערצעט)

fifteenth פֿופֿצנט (var. פֿופֿצעט)

sixteenth זעכצנט (var. זעכצעט)

seventeenth זיבעצנט (var. זיבעצעט)

eighteenth אַכצנט (var. אַכצעט)

nineteenth ניינצנט (var. ניינצעט)

twentieth צוואַנציקסט

thirtieth דרייסיקסט

fortieth פֿערציקסט

fiftieth פֿופֿציקסט

sixtieth זעכציקסט

seventieth זיבעציקסט

eightieth אַכציקסט

ninetieth ניינציקסט

hundredth הונדערטסט

thousandth טויזנטסט

ten thousandth צען טויזנטסט

hundred thousandth הונדערט טויזנטסט

millionth מיליאָנט

SAMPLES OF ORDINAL NUMBERS

Second Avenue צווייטע (א 2טע) עוועניו

אויף דער צווייטער (א 2טער) ענעניז on Second Avenue
 צוויי און פֿערציקסטע (א 42סטע) גאָס 42nd Street
 אויף דער צוויי און פֿערציקסטער (א 42סטער) גאָס on 42nd Street
 צום טויזנטסטן (א 1000סטן) מאל for the thousandth time
 צום צען טויזנטסטן (א 10,000סטן) מאל for the ten thousandth time
 די ערשטע צוויי ביכער the first two books

12.2.2 Ordinal numbers as adverbs

Points made in discussion may be numbered by adverbializing ordinals by suffixing **נט**-, usually [nz]. Where only two points are being made, Semitic component ראשיִת [réyshəs] 'firstly' and שניִת [shéynəs] 'secondly' may be substituted for ערשטנט and צווייטנט. If extra emphasis is required, ראשיִת כל [réyshəkòl] 'first of all' and והשניִת [vəhàshéynəs] 'and secondly' may be used.

firstly [ershtnz] ערשטנט
 secondly [tsveytnz] צווייטנט
 thirdly [dritnz] דריטנט
 fourthly [fertynz] פֿערטנט
 fifthly [fiftnz] פֿינפֿטנט
 sixthly [zekstnz] זעקסטנט

12.3 FRACTIONS

Fractions are formed by suffixing **טל**- or **סטל**-, generally along the lines of the ordinals (→ §12.2), to the unsuffixed form of the ordinal number. They are neutral in gender. Simple major-digit fractions with a numerator of one

may alternatively be expressed with suffix חלק [khéylik / khéylek] 'part'. The חלק forms may be used in everyday situations but the חל- forms alone are used in arithmetic. Note the special form העלפֿט (די) 'half (n.)' and its adjective counterpart האַלב. האַלב inflects for case and gender as an attributive adjective. Single digit number plus a half may alternatively be expressed by suffixing האַלבן- to the ordinal stem of the *following* full number, e.g. דריטהאַלבן = two and a half, פֿערטהאַלבן = three and a half. Note, however, אַנדערטהאַלבן for 'one and a half'.

12.3.1 Major fractions

העלפֿט half

third	דריט-חלק [drít khèylik] / דריטל
fourth	פֿערט-חלק [fért khèylik] / פֿערטל
fifth	פֿינפֿט-חלק [fínft khèylik] / פֿינפֿטל
sixth	זעקסט-חלק [zékst khèylik] / זעקסטל
seventh	זיבעט-חלק [zíbet khèylik] / זיבעטל
eighth	אַכט-חלק [ákht khèylik] / אַכטל
ninth	נײַנט-חלק [náynt khèylik] / נײַנטל
tenth	צענט-חלק [tsént khèylik] / צענטל
eleventh	עלפֿט-חלק [éíft khèylik] / עלפֿטל
twelfth	צוועלפֿט-חלק [tsvéíft khèylik] / צוועלפֿטל
thirteenth	(var. דרייצעטל) דרייצנטל
fourteenth	(var. פֿערצעטל) פֿערצנטל
fifteenth	(var. פֿופֿצעטל) פֿופֿצנטל
sixteenth	(var. זעכצעטל) זעכצנטל
seventeenth	(var. זיבעצעטל) זיבעצנטל
eighteenth	(var. אַכצעטל) אַכצנטל

nineteenth נִינְצֵנְטֵל (var. נִינְצֵעֵטֵל)

twentieth צוואנציקסטל

hundredth הונדערטסטל (var. הונדערטל) / [húndərt khèylik]

thousandth טויזנטסטל (var. טויזנטל) / [tóyznt khèylik]

millionth מיליאָנטסטל / [milyónt khèylik]

SAMPLES OF FRACTIONS

an eighth אָן אַכטל

one eighth איין אַכטל

four fifths פֿיר פֿינפֿטל

three and a half (פֿערטהאַלבן -) דרייַ מיט אַ האַלב

six ninetenths זעקס נִינְצֵנְטֵל

nine twenty-fifths נִיין פֿינף-אָן צוואנציקסטל

12.4 THE ALPHABETIC NUMBERING SYSTEM

The traditional Jewish numbering system uses the letters of the alphabet. Combined numbers are ordered downward. From 1,000 and upward, the system recycles itself, separating the thousands from the small numbers by an apostrophe and/or by use of larger or bold letters for the thousands).

12.4.1 The basic alphabetic numbers

1	א
2	ב
3	ג
4	ד
5	ה

6	ו
7	ז
8	ח
9	ט
10	י
11	יא
12	יב
13	יג
14	יד
15	טו
16	טז
17	יז
18	יח
19	יט
20	כ
30	ל
40	מ
50	נ
60	ס
70	ע
80	פ
90	צ
100	ק
200	ר
300	ש
400	ת
500	תק
600	תר
700	תש
800	תת

900	תתק
1000	א'
2000	ב'
3000	ג'
4000	ד'
5000	ה'

SAMPLES OF ALPHABETIC NUMBERS

18	יח
28	כח
36	לו
40	מ
77	עז
120	קכ
248	רמח
365	שסה
969	תתקסט

12.4.1.1 Anomalies

The anomalies in the system result from traditional cultural considerations. The combinations 10 (י) + 5 (ה) for 15 and 10 (י) + 6 (ו) would result, when written out, in variants of the sacred name of God. They are therefore subject to the traditional ban on using God's name in vain in an everyday context, even where reference to God is not intended. The combinations 9 (ט) + 6 (ו) and 9 (ט) + 7 (ז) are substituted, giving טו = 15 and טז = 16. Traditional sacred Hebrew and Aramaic books with extensive Jewish letter numbering also avoid combinations with negative overtones, e.g. 304 = דפ, (4+300) rather than the expected פד (300+4,) because it spells the word פד [shed] 'evil spirit'.

12.4.2 Supplementary uses of the Jewish alphabet

12.4.2.1 Calendar

The Jewish calendar is outlined in §13.5.

12.4.2.2 Numerology

Traditional Jewish numerology, called גמטריא [gemátriyə] 'gematria', adds up the numeric values of the letters of Hebrew words and names as a starting point for exegetical or mystical extrapolation. It is a practice prevalent in rabbinic lore and kabbalistic inquiry. Thus, for example, it has been noted in support of the rabbinic adage יין יצא סוד [khñəs yáyin | yòtso sód] 'When wine goes in, a secret comes out', that the words for 'wine' and 'secret' both add up to 70 in gematria (wine = יין = 10+10+50 = 70; secret = סוד = 60+6+4 = 70). In a lighter vein, traditional wedding speeches often entertain guests by demonstrating the compatibility and good fortune of the bride and bridegroom via interlocking series of gematrias.

12.4.2.3 Acronyms

Traditional Jewish acronyms are called ראשי-תבות [roshətéyvəs] '[abbreviations from the] heads [=first letters] of words'. Traditionally, words thus created are marked by the double apostrophe " before their final letter to mark their acronymity, but the apostrophe is frequently omitted for well established acronyms. A number of semantic classes are particularly inclined to acronyms. Great rabbinic figures are often known to Yiddish speakers by their acronyms. Most frequently, the vowel *a* is supplied to create syllables from the initials, except in final syllables ending in a vowel where *o* is supplied. Maimonides is traditionally known as דער רמב"ם [der rámbam] 'the Rambam', the acronym from his full traditional name

רַבֵּנוּ מֹשֶׁה בֶּן חִימון *Rabéynu Móyshe ben Máymen*. The great sixteenth-century Ashkenazic codifier Rabbi Moyshe Isserles is known as דער רמ"א *[der ramó]* 'the Ramo' from his initials. The tradition is on occasion continued in modern Yiddish cultural circles. Among the best known examples are leading Yiddish cultural institutions founded in pre-World War II Eastern Europe — ייִדישער וויסנשאַפֿטלעכער אינסטיטוט *ייִחָאָ* [*yívo / yivó*] ('Yiddish Scientific Institute', now the Yivo Institute for Jewish Research in New York), צענטראַלע ייִדישע שול אָרגאַניזאַציע *ציִשָׁה* [*tsísho*] ('Central Yiddish School Organization') and צענטראַלע ייִדישע קולטור אָרגאַניזאַציע *ציִקָה* [*tsíko / tsikó*] ('Central Yiddish Culture Organization'). A number of Jewish names are themselves תִּיבּוֹת *e.g.* כַּיִץ *[kats]* 'Katz' from צִדִּיק בֶּן צִדִּיק *[kóyhen tsédak]* 'righteous kohen (descendant of the Biblical priestly caste)'.

13 TIME

13.0 OVERVIEW

Alongside international units of time and the general calendar, Yiddish retains active use of the Jewish calendar and concepts of time associated with it.

13.1 LIFE

13.1.1 Age

עלטער age

ווי אַלט...? how old...?

— יאָר (אַלט) years old —

(געבורטסטאָג var. (דער) געבוירן-טאָג birthday)

SAMPLES OF AGE

ווי אַלט ביסטו? How old are you (familiar)?

איך בין אַלט צוויי און צוואַנציק יאָר I'm twenty-two years old

13.1.2 Youthfulness

נייגעבוירן just-born

young יונג (comparative: יאָנגער; superlative: — יאָנגסט)

middle aged מיטליעריק

quite young; youngish יונגלעך

quite old; oldish אַלטלעך

old אַלט (comparative: עלטער; superlative: עלטסט)

13.1.3 The age cycle

baby [éyfaɪə(h)] (דאָס) עופֿעלעך

child (דאָס) קינד(ער)

little boy (דאָס) יינגעלעך

little girl (דאָס) מיידעלעך

boy (דער/דאָס) יינגל(עך)

bar-mitsvah boy (i.e. 13 year old) [bókħər(ɪm)] (דער) בר־מצוה בחור(ים)

girl (די/דאָס) מיידל(עך)

young man (also: fellow; bachelor) [bókħər(ɪm)] (דער) בחור(ים)

young woman [bókħərta(s)] (די) באַורטע(ס)

(rare: מיידל is the usual female correspondent of בחור)

young fellow [yungərmán] (דער) יונגערמאַן

young woman (די) יונגע פֿרוי(ען)

man (דער) מאַן (מענער)

woman (די) פֿרוי(ען)

old man [zókħ; skéynim] (דער) זקן(ים)

old woman [skéynə(s)] (די) זקנה (זקנות)

13.1.4 Death

7 days of mourning upon a death [shíva] (די) שבעה

(end of) thirty-day mourning period [shlóyshtim] (די) שלושים (pt.)

date of anniversary of a death יאָרצייט (דער/די)

13.2 TIME

13.2.1 Units of time

second [səkúnda(s)] (די) סעקונדע(ס)

minute [minút(n)] (די) מינוט(ן)

hour [shó(ə)] (די) שעה(ן)

day טאָג (דער) (pl. טעג)

period of twenty-four hours [məslés(n)] (דער) מעת-לעת(ן)

week (די) וואָכ(ן)

month [khóydes] (דער) חודש (pl. חדשים [khadóshim])

year(s) (דאָס) יאָר(ן)

decade [yortséndlik(er)] (דער) יאָרצענדליק(ער)

century [yorchúndert(er)] (דער) יאָרהונדערט(ער)

millennium [yortóyznt(er)] (דער) יאָרטויזנט(ער)

13.2.1.1 Plurals of יאָר, שעה and מינוט

When used with a specific number, 'minute', שעה 'hour' and יאָר 'year' themselves serve as plural forms, e.g. צען מינוט 'ten minutes', צוויי יאָר 'two years', צוואַנציק יאָר 'twenty years'. When used as conceptual time units with no specific number, the plural in -ן is used, e.g. מינוטן, ניט 'minutes, not hours'; יאָרן לאַנג 'for many years'.

13.2.2 Clock time

Clock time is given without a preposition, e.g. מיר קומען צוויי אַזייגער.

'We're coming at 2 o'clock'. Hours and minutes may be given consecutively – 9:21 is read *בין איין און צוואנציק*. Note the alternative forms for expressing half hours: *האלב נאך* 'half past' after the preceding whole hour, and *האלב* 'half (to)' before the following hour, e.g. 8:30 = *האלב בין* = *האלב נאך אכט* – *אכט דרייסיק*.

o'clock *אזיגער*

a quarter to *א פערטל צו*

a quarter past *א פערטל נאך*

–thirty *דרייסיק*

half past *האלב נאך*

half to *האלב*

SAMPLES OF CLOCK TIME

צוועלף דרייסיק – *האלב נאך צוועלף* – *האלב איינס* 12:30

א פערטל נאך איינס 1:15

פינף און צוואנציק נאך דריי 3:25

דריי פופציק – *צען (מינוט) צו פיר* 3:50

פינף אזיגער 5:00

זיבן פינף און פערציק – *א פערטל צו אכט* 7:45

אכט זעקס און צוואנציק 8.26

13.2.3 Parts of the day

פארטאג before dawn

אין דער פרי (also spelled *אינדערפרי*) in the morning

נאך מיטאג, נאכמיטאג, נאך מיטיק (also spelled *נאכמיטיק*) in the afternoon;

פארנאכט at dusk; in the early evening

אויף דער נאכט [avdərnaht] in the evening (→ §13.3.2.1)

in the evening אין אָחנט
at night [banácht] בינאַכט

SAMPLES OF CLOCK TIME AND DAY TIME

4 a.m. פֿיר פֿאַרטאָג
10 a.m. צען אינדערפֿרי
3 p.m. דריי נאַכמיטיק
6 p.m. אַכט אין אָחנט - אַכט אויף דער נאַכט
11 p.m. עלף בינאַכט

13.2.4 Conceptual time sequences

just a second!; in a jiffy! אַ מינוטקעלע [minútakelə] / אַ סעקונדע
just one moment אַ מאָמענט [momént]
a little while אַ חילינקע
a while אַ חילע
quite a while אַ הימלע

13.2.5 Idiomatic time sequences

a long long time ago פֿון למעלניצקיס צייטן
(‘of Chmielnitski’s times’, after Bogdan Chmielnitski, who led massacres of
Jews in the Ukraine in 1648 and 1649)

seldom [shmíta] אין אַ שמיטה
(‘once in a sabbatical’ after the Biblical sabbatical at seven-year intervals)

very seldom [yóyvi] אין אַ יובל
(‘once in a jubilee’ after the Biblical jubilee at fifty-year intervals)

very long [góles] לַאֲנֵנוּ חַי דַּעַר נְלוּתָּ (→ §16.1)

(‘long as the diaspora’ after the two-thousand-year Jewish diaspora)

very short [púrim] בֵּיז פּוּרִים [estartónas] פֶּן אֶסְתֵּר-תַּעֲנִיתָ

(‘from the Fast of Esther to Purim’, i.e. a timespan of one day)

in / until a ripe old age [məshélahks yóy] אֵין \ בֵּיז מִתּוֹשֶׁלַחַס יָאָרָן

(‘Methuselah’s years’, after Methuselah who lived 969 years; cf. Genesis 5:27)

13.2.6 Relative time concepts

now אִיצְטַעַר (var. אִיצְטַעַר, אִיצְטַעַר; nonliterary var. יַעֲצַעַר)

then; (= ‘at that time’) דַּעַמְאָלֶט (var. דַּעַמְאָלֶט, דַּעַמְאָלֶט) דַּעַמְאָלֶט

before (preposition requiring object) פֶּנָּאָר

after (preposition requiring object) נֶאָךְ

before, previously (adv.) פֶּרִיעַר

later (adv.) שְׁעַטַּעַר

during [mésheks] בַּעַתְּ [əys(ə)s] \ בַּשַּׁעַתְּ [beshás/pshás] / אֵין חֶשֶׁךְ פֶּן [mésheks]

concurrent with גַּלִּי-צִיטִיק חֵיט

at the same time צו (וּ אֵין) דַּעַר זַעַל-בִּיקַעַר צִיט

13.3 THE CALENDAR

13.3.1 Seasons

spring פֶּרִילִינֵג (דַּעַר)

summer זומַעַר (דַּעַר)

autumn [harpst] האַרבסט (דער)

winter חײַנטער (דער)

13.3.2 Days

Sunday זונטיק

Monday מאָנטיק

Tuesday דינסטיק

Wednesday מיטוואָך

Thursday דאָנערשטיק

Friday פֿרייטיק

Saturday [shábəs] שבת

13.3.2.1 Friday and Saturday evening

Because the Jewish Sabbath, like all Jewish holidays, begins on the evening preceding the date of the holiday (→ §13.5.3), the preceding day has special cultural and linguistic status. In addition to פֿרייטיק, Friday is also called שבת ערב [èrev shábəs] 'eve of Sabbath'. The part of Friday afternoon immediately preceding the onset of the Sabbath celebration is known as פֿאַרשבת [farshábəs]. Friday evening, upon and following the start of the Sabbath, is פֿרייטיק-נאַכט(ס) [fríytsik-nákht(s)]. Saturday night, from the end of the Sabbath at sundown and onwards, is known as מוצאי שבת [motsə shábəs], שבת-נאַכט(ס) [shábəs tsu nákht(s)] or שבתע נאַכט(ס) [sh(a)béysə nakht(s)] 'Saturday night' (→ §10.3.7). The stock-phrase use of preposition אויף דער נאַכט [avdərnákht] is unique to these days. On other evenings of the week, Wednesday evening 'Wednesday evening' (→ §13.2.3).

13.3.3 Months

January	יאנואַר
February	פֿעברואַר
March	מאַרץ (var. מערץ)
April	אַפּריל
May	מאַי (var. spelling: מאי)
June	יוני
July	יולי
August	אויגוסט
September	סעפטעמבער
October	אָקטאָבער
November	נאָוועמבער
December	דעצעמבער

13.3.4 Dates

Dates are formed with ordinal numbers (→ §12.2). They are masculine and traditionally given in dative with masculine definite article דעם.

SAMPLES OF DATES

October 3	(דעם דריטן אָקטאָבער = דעם 3טן אָקטאָבער)
April 12	(דעם צוועלטן אַפּריל = דעם 12טן אַפּריל)
January 28	(דעם אַכט און צוואַנציקסטן יאנואַר = דעם 28סטן יאנואַר)

13.4 USE OF PREPOSITIONS WITH EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

In many cases where English uses 'at' 'on' or 'for' in expressions of time, there is no preposition at all. Preposition אויף [af] is used in the sense of

intention with respect to a period of time, but no preposition appears in the factual recounting of the period of time. **צוריק** — **היט** corresponds with 'ago'; **אין** — **ארום** corresponds with 'in — time'.

SAMPLES OF THE USE AND NON-USE OF PREPOSITIONS

WITH EXPRESSIONS OF TIME

We'll meet at 4 **מיר וועלן זיך טרעפֿן פֿיר אַזייגער**

I'm coming on the 24th **איך קום דעם 24סטן**

I came intending to stay three weeks **איך בין געקומען אויף [af] דריי וואָכן**

I stayed three weeks **איך בין געבליבן דריי וואָכן**

I saw them ten years ago **איך האָב זיי געזען היט צען יאָר צוריק**

I'll see them again in ten years **איך וועל זיי חידער זען אין צען יאָר אַרום**

13.5 THE JEWISH CALENDAR

13.5.1 The calendric system

The Jewish lunar calendar makes use of the alphabetic numbering system (→ §12.4). The calendar is calibrated to Biblical history as chronologized in Jewish tradition, and counts from the Biblical creation of the world. That event is placed in Jewish year 1, which corresponds with 3761/3760 BC. Thus, for example, 586 BC coincides with the Jewish years **ה'קע** (3,175) and **ה'קעו** (3,176); 1492 AD coincides with **ה'רנב** (5,252) and **ה'רנג** (5,253). To simplify the system for everyday use, the **ה'** representing 5,000 is deleted where discussion is limited to years after **ה'** (i.e. AD 1239/1240). The abbreviated forms of years are usually written out using the traditional double apostrophe (") before the final letter. Thus, 1900 is **תרס"א** / **תרס"ט** ([5.]661

/ [5.]662). To convert any Jewish year after 1240, add 1,240 to the abbreviated Jewish date (i.e. without the 'ה' = 5,000). If the exact date is known and it falls between the Jewish new year in autumn and 1 January, add 1239 instead. If the exact date is not known, it is customary to add 1240 with the understood caution that the first few months of the Jewish year coincide with the preceding year. Jewish dates generally become 'words' via the insertion of an [a] vowel for years that end in a consonant, and an [o] vowel for years that end in a vowel, e.g. תשמ"ח [tashmákh] = 1987/1988, תשנ"א [tashnó] = 1990/1991. Many names of years are historical concepts, e.g. גזירות ת"ח ות"ט [gzéyras tákh vətát] 'the persecutions of [5.]408 and [5.]409', refers to the massacres of Ukrainian Jewry in those years. Adding 1240 converts the years to AD 1648 and 1649.

13.5.2 Months

The Jewish lunar year has twelve months. Leap years, which occur seven times within a nineteen-year cycle, have thirteen months. The month added is **אדר** [véyodər] also called **אדר ב'** [òdər déyz].

תשרי [tíshrə] (September / October)

חשוון [khéshvən] (October / November)

כסלו [kíslov] (November / December)

טבת [téyvəs] (December / January)

שבט [shvat] (January / February)

אדר [ódər] (February / March; called **אדר א'** [òdər áləf] in leap years)

אדר ב' [véyodər] / **אדר ב'** [òdər déyz] (in leap years only)

ניסן [nísən] (March / April)

אייר [íyər] (April / May)

סיון [sívn] (May / June)

תמוז [támaz] (June / July)

אב [ov] (July / August)

אלול [ólal] (August / September)

13.5.3. Dates of the month and of major holidays

Dates of the month are given using the Jewish alphabetic numbering system (→ §12.4). The Jewish day extends from dusk to dusk and the date therefore begins on the previous day in the general calendar. Jewish holidays therefore begin on the evening of the date before their counterparts in the general calendar.

MAJOR JEWISH HOLIDAYS AND THE DATES ON WHICH THEY BEGIN

Holiday	Transcription	Popular English name	DATE
ראש השנה	[roshashónə]	'Jewish New Year'	א' תשרי
יום כיפור	[yomkíper]	'Day of Atonement'	י' תשרי
סוכות	[súkas]	'Feast of Tabernacles'	ט"ו תשרי
שמחת תורה	[simkhas tóryə]	'Simhath Torah'	כ"ג תשרי
חנוכה	[khánəkə]	Hanukkah	כ"ה כסלו
ט"ו בשבט	[tu bishvát]	'Tu biShevat'	ט"ו שבט
חמשה-עשר (-)	[kham(í)shóəər]		
פורים	[púrim]	'Purim'	י"ד אדר
פסח	[póysakh]	'Passover'	ט"ו ניסן
לג בעומר	[lag bóymər]	'Lag baOmer'	י"ח אייר
שבועות	[shvuúə]	'Shavuoth'	ו' סיון
ט"ז בתמוז	[shivóəər betámuz]	'Fast of Tamuz'	ט"ז תמוז
תשעה באב	[tíshəbov]	'Fast of Av'	ט' אב

14 SYNTAX

14.0 OVERVIEW

Yiddish syntax is highly flexible. Because the three cases (→ §5.1) themselves maintain clarity of subject and object, there is scope for extensive variation in word order. Changes in word order empower the speaker and writer to determine nuance and emphasis by transposing many of the parts of a sentence at will with no loss of clarity. The major constraints are the placement of the inflected verb in second position within a sentence, the application in certain conditions of obligatory inversion of subject and predicate, and the position of verbal additive זיך and negator נישט.

14.1 THE INFLECTED-VERB-SECOND RULE

The inflected-verb-second rule stipulates that the inflected verb be placed in second position within a sentence. Inflecting verbs are those that inflect for person and number. In the present tense, the main verb itself inflects (→ §7.5) and is therefore subject to the rule. In the past and future tenses, it is the helping verbs that inflect (האָבן or זיין in the past → §§7.6 – 7.7, וועלן in the future → §7.9). The helping verbs in the past and future tenses must adhere to the inflected-verb-second rule. The main verbs – the past participle in the past and the infinitive in the future – do not inflect and are therefore exempt from the rule.

14.2 BASIC SENTENCE ORDER: NOUN PLUS INFLECTED VERB

The primitive sentence type comprises a noun phrase followed by a verb phrase. Note from the samples provided that the inflected verb adheres to the inflected-verb-second rule in all three tenses. In the present, where the main verb itself inflects, it is simply placed after the subject. In the past, the appropriate part of the past tense helping verb – **הָיָה** or **זָהָן** – is second. In the future, the appropriate part of **וְהָיָה** must be placed second.

SAMPLE SENTENCES IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

דו ביסט גערעכט

You are right

past

דער טאטע האָט גערעדט מיט זײַן ייִנגעלע

Father spoke to his little boy

future

די נײַע לערערין װײַזט אָנקומען מױנטיק

The new teacher (f.) will arrive on Monday

14.3 WORD PLACEMENT IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

14.3.1 זיך in basic sentence order

If a verb is accompanied by additive **זיך** (→ 67.3), **זיך** immediately follows

the inflected verb in basic sentence order. The result is that in the past and future of synthetic verbs, and in the present of verbs with stressed prefixes, זיך is sandwiched between the inflected and uninflected verb.

SAMPLES OF זיך IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

I'm delighted to hear the good news איך פֿאַר די גוטע נײַעס
 People are pushy in that company מ'שטופט זיך אין יענער פֿירמע
 (inf. [shtupm] זיך שטופן 'push oneself; be ambitious; sell oneself')

present of verbs with stressed prefixes

I fit in here איך פֿאַס זיך דאָ אַרײַן (inf. אַרײַנפֿאַסן זיך)
 Stop bothering me! אָפּשטענענען זיך אָמאָן (inf. טשעטע זיך
 bothering someone')

past

We said goodbye to each other last year מ'האַט זיך געזעגנט פֿאַרמײַנאַרן
 They greeted each other on the street זיי האָבן זיך באַגריסט אין גאָס

future

We'll see each other again next year מ'זעט זיך חידער זען איבערמאָר
 I will miss you (lit. 'The heart will yearn') דאָס האַרץ זעט זיך פֿאַרבענקען

14.3.2 Object pronouns in basic sentence order

Accusative pronouns (→ §6.1.2) immediately follow the inflected verb. Dative pronouns (→ §6.1.3) follow the preposition of which they are the object.

SAMPLES OF OBJECT PRONOUNS IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

Our friends can see us אונדזערע חברים [khavéyrim] קענען אונדז זען

He looks at you (familiar) all day ער קוקט אויף דיר אַ גאנצן טאָג

present of verbs with stressed prefix

They are throwing us out (inf. אַרויסחערן) מ'חערט אונדז אַרויס

They're taking everything away from us מ'נעמט אַלעס אַוועק פֿון אונדז

past

We were fooled (/cheated) מ'האָט אונדז אָנגעטראָג

They spoke to us זיי האָבן מיט אונדז גערעדט

future

We'll see them tomorrow מיר זעלן זיי מָאַרגן זען

They won't yell at us זיי זעלן אויף אונדז נישט שרייען

14.3.3 נ'ט in basic sentence order

Negator נ'ט (→ §7.4) occurs somewhere after the inflected verb. In sentences with helping (inflected) and main (uninflected) verbs, נ'ט occurs somewhere between the two. This is applicable for all helping+main verb combinations (past → §§7.6–7.7; future → §7.9; present of verbs with stressed prefixes → §8.2; analytic verbs → §9). The scope for manoeuvre within these constraints allows for considerable variation of sentence emphasis (→ §14.10).

SAMPLES OF נִיט IN BASIC SENTENCE ORDER

present

איך נִיט גי' I'm not going

זיי חייטן נִיט פֿון זייערע הענט און פֿיס

They don't know what they're talking about (lit. 'They don't know of their hands and feet')

present of verbs with stressed prefix

(אויפֿשטיין. inf.) מיר שטייען נִיט אויף [uf] פֿארי We're not getting up early

(אָוועקוואַרפֿן. inf.) איך האָרף נִיט אָוועק דעם מאָנטל

I'm not throwing away the coat

past

איך בין נִיט געפֿאָרן אין ירושלים [yerusholáyim] I didn't go to Jerusalem

ער האָט זיך נִיט געפֿונען He didn't find himself

future

מיר וועלן נִיט פֿאָרן אין מאָנטרעאַל We won't go to Montreal

מיר וועלן זיך נִיט זען פֿרייטיק We won't see each other on Friday

14.3.3.1 נִיט with זיך

Where verbs have additive זיך (→ 57.3), נִיט always precedes זיך. Adverbs may intervene.

SAMPLES OF נִיט WITH זיך

איך באַמי זיך נִיט I don't try

איך באַמי זיך שוין נִיט I don't try anymore

14.3.3.2 נִיט with object pronouns

נִיט follows an object personal pronoun (→ §§6.1.2 – 6.1.3). An adverb may appear between them. In analogous sentences with common or proper nouns, נִיט may precede the noun.

SAMPLES OF נִיט WITH OBJECT PRONOUNS

- I don't see him upstairs איך זע אים נִיט אויבן
 I don't see him upstairs anymore איך זע אים שוין נִיט אויבן
 I don't see the people upstairs איך זע נִיט די מענטשן אויבן
 I don't see Zálman upstairs איך זע נִיט זלמנען [zálmənən] אויבן

14.3.3.3 נִיט קיין

Where a transitive verb with an indefinite object is negated and נִיט קיין (→ §7.4) is used, קיין [kin / ka] occurs immediately before the noun phrase that is its object. נִיט קיין are often separated by the requirements of נִיט placement.

SAMPLES OF THE POSITION OF נִיט קיין

- We don't have any time מיר האָבן נִיט קיין צײַט
 They didn't have any money זיי האָבן נִיט געהאַט קיין געלט
 You won't have any worries here [dáygas] וועסט נִיט האָבן דאָ קיין דאגות
 Don't tell me any stories [máysəs] דערצייל מיר נִיט קיין מעשיות

14.4 INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER: INFLECTED VERB PLUS NOUN

In inverted sentence order, the inflected verb is jumped forward so that it precedes the subject. The most frequent cause of inversion is the inflected-verb-second rule. Jumping the inflected verb forward places it in second position, in conformity with the rule. In past and future, this generally results

in separation of the helping verb (הָעָבָן or זָיִן in the past; חֵלֵן in the future) from the main verb (past participle or infinitive). Main verbs, which are not subject to the inflected-verb-second rule, are unaffected by the jump.

14.4.1 Adverbial triggered compulsory inversion

Adverbials comprise adverbs, adverb phrases (phrases launched by an adverb) and prepositional phrases (functioning in effect as adverbs → §10.4). Adverbials at the beginning of a sentence would result in the inflected verb being in third position. This is averted by inversion, which jumps the inflected verb forward to second position. The samples provided illustrate the same sentence in basic sentence order and in inverted order triggered by placement of an adverbial at the beginning of the sentence. Subject and object are underlined; adverbials triggering inversion are **outlined**. The adverbs and prepositional phrases provided have similar meanings.

SAMPLES OF ADVERBS AND ADVERB PHRASES TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

Málkə is coming soon → מַלְכָּה קֹומַט בְּאַלֶּד
בְּאַלֶּד קֹומַט מַלְכָּה

past

We danced late at night → מִיר הָאָבָן נֶעֱטָאָנְצַט שְׂפֵעַט אִין דֶּער נַאכְט
שְׂפֵעַט אִין דֶּער נַעֲמָלֶפֶט הָאָבָן מִיר נֶעֱטָאָנְצַט

future

I will certainly go → אִיךְ חֵלֵן אַחֲדֵאִי [aváda] גִּיין
אַחֲדֵאִי חֵלֵן אִיךְ גִּיין

SAMPLES OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

Máike is coming in a little while → מלכּה קומט אין אַ חילינקע
אין אַ חילינקע קומט מלכּה

past

We danced until late at night → מיר האָבן געטאַנצט ביז שפעט אין דער נאַכט
ביז שפעט אין דער נאַכט האָבן מיר געטאַנצט

future

I will certainly go → איך וועל אויף זיכער [avzíkher] גיין
אויף זיכער וועל איך גיין

14.4.2 Midsentence adverb-triggered inversion

A sentence need only have a noun phrase and a verb phrase. A written sentence may comprise any number of true sentences tied by link words. Whether or not inversion is triggered in the middle of a sentence depends on the nature of the link word. If the link word is an adverbial, inversion is triggered. If it is a conjunction, there is no inversion. In the samples provided, subject and object are underlined; inversion triggers (adverbs, adverb phrases and prepositional phrases) are outlined. Conjunctions, which do not trigger inversion, are in **bold type**.

SAMPLES OF MIDSSENTENCE ADVERBIALS TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

I'm coming on Thursday → איך קום דאָנערשטיק
מאָסער קום איך דאָנערשטיק

past

→ **מיר זינגען געפאָרן אין אייראָפּע** We went to Europe

פֿאַרן זומער זינגען מיר געפאָרן אין אייראָפּע

We went to Europe before the summer

future

→ **זי וועט נישט גיין** [zít / zít / zí vet] She won't go

מאָגליכער וועט זי נישט גיין [místáma] [vetsí / vedzí] She probably won't go

SAMPLES OF MIDSSENTENCE CONJUNCTIONS *NOT* TRIGGERING INVERSION

present

→ **איך קום דאָנערשטיק** I'm coming on Thursday

איך מיינ אז איך קום דאָנערשטיק I think that I'm coming on Thursday

past

→ **מיר זינגען געפאָרן אין אייראָפּע** We went to Europe

דאָס איז געשען ווען מיר זינגען געווען אין אייראָפּע

It happened when we went to Europe

future

→ **זי וועט נישט גיין** She won't go

דאָס קען אים נישט פאַרטראָגן און זי וועט נישט גיין

Dvóyra can't stand him and she won't go

14.4.3 Distinguishing conjunctions from adverbs

By definition, adverbs trigger inversion while conjunctions do not. It is

therefore important to know which link words are adverbs and which are conjunctions. There are hundreds of adverbs in the language used to describe states of time, place, feeling and situation. Adverbs (including adverbial and prepositional phrases) often represent the more complex logical relations (e.g. *לְאוֹדֵעֲכֶם* 'nevertheless', *לְעֵין דָּעֵר אֲנִידֵרֵר זֵיט* 'on the other hand'). Many conjunctions are the link words that express the basic linking concepts 'and', 'but', 'if', 'or' 'because' and 'that'. Some, however, do express time relations, and some have developed more sophisticated logical connotations. In stock phrases combining an adverb with a conjunction, it is the final word that determines status with respect to triggering inversion. *וְ* 'as' concludes the stock phrase *בְּאַלְד וְ* 'as soon as'. The entire phrase therefore functions as a conjunction and inversion is blocked (→ §5.10 on conjunctions vs. prepositions with comparative adjectives).

14.4.3.1 Major conjunctions

but *אַבער*

or *אויב וְ*

or *אָדער*

and *און*

that; when; if *אַז*

before *אַידער* (preceding subject; cf. adverb *פֿריער*)

as soon as *בְּאַלְד וְ*

although [hagám] *האָט*

which / that *וואָס*

when / if *ווען וְ*

as / like *ווי*

if / in case / in the event *טאָמער*

although *אַמט*

after [nogh dém vi] **נאָך דעם ווי** (preceding subject; cf. preposition **נאָך**)

notwithstanding that [nit gekùkt av dém vos] **נאָך וואָס**

but / only **נאָר**

rather; it is rather the case that [nor vodén] **נאָר וואָס דען (= נאָר וואָס דען)**

14.4.4 Present participle triggered compulsory inversion

Present participles (→ §7.2) trigger inversion. Inversion triggering present participles are **outlined**.

SAMPLES OF PRESENT PARTICIPLES TRIGGERING INVERSION

גלייפֿנדיק וואָס וואָס [kháva] באַטראַכט דעם ענין [inyen]

While walking, Kháva thought about the matter

לויפֿנדיק וואָס דער אַטלעט צעקלאַמט אַ פֿוס

While running, the athlete injured his foot

14.4.5 If-then clause triggered compulsory inversion

If-then clauses trigger inversion in the then-clause. Inversion is triggered regardless of the type of word beginning the if-clause. Inversion here has the force of English 'then'. Noun phrases and inflected verb are underlined, inversion-triggering if-clauses are **outlined**.

SAMPLES OF IF-THEN CLAUSE TRIGGERED INVERSION

→ **וועלן קומען צו דיר צו נאָסט** We will come to visit you

וועלן קומען צו דיר צו נאָסט וועלן קומען צו דיר צו נאָסט

If you invite us, we'll come to visit you

emphasis (→ §14.10) triggers inversion. In the samples provided, inversion-triggering fronted words are **outlined**.

SAMPLES OF OBJECT-FRONTING INVERSION

I really needed *this*! [dóz dafikh nòkh] איך נאָך דאָס דאָרף איך נאָך

I have enough *apples* נענוג האָב איך פּאַפּל

We didn't need *him* yesterday נישט געדאַרפֿט האָבן מיר נעכטן [em] זיינס

I have too many *problems* already צוֹפֿיל האָב איך שוין פּראָבלעמען

14.4.8 Stylistic inversion

Unless it is subject to obligatory inversion, the first sentence in a spoken or written text exhibits basic sentence order (noun phrase followed by verb phrase). Follow-on sentences may, however, be inverted to avert monotony. Such inversion often has the additional force of 'so', 'then' or 'and' in a continuous text, serving to provide continuity the way an adverb, prepositional phrase or conjunction might do. In many traditional styles of discourse and narrative, only the first sentence in any paragraph is in basic word order. The rest may be processed by stylistic inversion.

SAMPLES OF STYLISTIC INVERSION

איך בין אַרײַן אין צימער. איז עס געווען פֿינצטער.

I entered the room. It was dark.

איך האָב נישט פֿאַרשטאַנען. האָב איך געלייענט ווייטער.

I didn't understand. So I continued reading.

איך האָב געוואָלט מיט אַיך רעדן. בין איך געקומען.

I wanted to speak with you (formal). So I came.

14.5 WORD PLACEMENT IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

14.5.1 זיך in inverted sentence order

זיך follows the nominative in inverted sentence order if the nominative is a personal pronoun. זיך follows the inflected verb where the nominative is a common or proper noun.

SAMPLES OF זיך IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

present

That is why he is delighted צוליב דעם פֿרייט ער זיך
That is why the boss is delighted צוליב דעם פֿרייט זיך דער באַלעבאָס

present of verbs with stressed prefixes

Why do you (familiar) refuse? פֿאַרװײַזט דאָנסטו זיך אָמ? (אַמזאָגן זיך. אמ)
Why does Esther refuse? פֿאַרװײַזט דאָנט זיך אַסתר [éstar] אָמ?

past

They became friends in Peru באַפֿרײַנדט זיי זיך באַפֿרײַנדט [bafráynt]
Those two became friends in Peru באַפֿרײַנדט זיי צוויי זיך באַפֿרײַנדט

future

We will meet next year איבערצײַגער װעט מען זיך טרעפֿן
The sons will meet next year איבערצײַגער װעלן זיך טרעפֿן די זין

14.5.2 Object pronouns in inverted sentence order

Accusative pronouns (→§6.1.2) immediately follow the subject. Dative

pronouns (→ §6.1.3) follow the preposition of which they are the object, as they do in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.2).

SAMPLES OF OBJECT PRONOUNS IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

present

While listening, he paints you (formal) צוהערנדיק זיך מאַלט ער אַיך

He looks at you (familiar) all day ער נאָמט אַיך אַלע דאָג

present of verbs with stressed prefix

Why are they throwing us out? וואָס פאַר אַזוי אַרױס וואָס זײ זענען וואָס אַרױס וואָס זענען

וואָס אַרױס נעמט מען פֿון אונדז אַלעס אַרױס וואָס זענען

Why are they taking everything away from us?

past

We were cheated on Thursday דאָסערשטיק האָט מען אונדז אָנגענומען

They spoke to us later ערענדט מיט אונדז נאָכדעם

future

Will we see them tomorrow? וועלן זיי זעהן דאָסערשטיק

Of course they won't yell at us זיכער וועלן זיי אַיך אונדז נישט שרייען

14.5.3 נישט in inverted sentence order

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3), נישט occurs somewhere after the inflected verb, and, in verbs comprising helping plus main verb, somewhere between the two.

SAMPLES OF נישט IN INVERTED WORD ORDER

present

Nevertheless, I'm not going דאָך נישט איך נישט

פֿאַרװאָס זײַ ניט װן זײַערע הענט און פֿיס?

Why don't they know what they're doing? (lit. 'Why don't they know of their hands and feet?')

present of verbs with stressed prefix

מאָנטיק שטייען מיר ניט אויף פֿרי We're not getting up early on Monday

דערהײל האָרף איך ניט אַרויס דעם מאָנטל

In the meantime, I'm not throwing away the coat

past

פֿאַרצײַגן בין איך ניט געפֿאָרן אין ירושלים [yerusholáyim]

Last year I didn't go to Jerusalem

future

אויב זײַ קומען העלן מיר ניט פֿאָרן אין מאָנטרעאַל

If they come, we won't go to Montreal

פֿאַרװאָס העלן מיר זיך ניט זען פֿרייטיק?

Why won't we see each other on Friday?

14.5.3.1 with זיך in inverted sentence order

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3.1), זיך always precedes ניט. Adverbs and the subject may appear between them.

SAMPLES OF WITH זיך IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

איצט באַמי איך זיך ניט I don't try now

איצט באַמי איך זיך שוין ניט Now I don't try anymore

איצט באַמיט זיך שוין שמעון [shíman] ניט Now Shíman doesn't try anymore

14.5.3.2 נ'ט with personal pronoun as subject in inverted sentence order

Where the subject that has been transposed by inversion is a personal pronoun, נ'ט must appear after the pronoun. An adverb may appear between them. Where the subject is a proper or common noun, נ'ט may precede the object noun.

SAMPLES OF נ'ט WITH SUBJECT NOUNS IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

If you come, he won't come אז דו קומסט העט ער נ'ט קומען
 אז דו קומסט העלן נ'ט קומען די מענטשן - העלן די מענטשן נ'ט קומען

If you come, the people won't come

אז דו קומסט העט נ'ט קומען בראַנדל - העט בראַנדל נ'ט קומען

If you come, Bráyndl won't come

14.5.3.3 נ'ט with object pronoun

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3.2), נ'ט follows an object personal pronoun. An adverb may appear between them. In analogous sentences with common or proper nouns, נ'ט may (and usually does) precede the object noun.

SAMPLES OF נ'ט WITH OBJECT NOUNS IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

Today, I don't see him upstairs הינט זע איך אים [em] נ'ט אויבן
 Today, I don't see him upstairs anymore הינט זע איך אים שוין נ'ט אויבן
 Today, I don't see the people upstairs הינט זע איך נ'ט די מענטשן אויבן
 Today, I don't see Zálmen upstairs הינט זע איך נ'ט זלמנען [zálmənən] אויבן

14.5.3.4 ק'ין נ'ט in inverted sentence order

As in basic sentence order (→ §14.3.3.3), ק'ין [kin / ka] occurs immediately before the noun phrase that is its object. נ'ט ק'ין are often separated by the requirements of נ'ט placement.

SAMPLES OF THE POSITION OF **ניט** IN INVERTED SENTENCE ORDER

We don't have any time on Sunday **ניט קיין צײַט**

האַסט מיר ניט דערציילט קיין באַבע־מעשה? [bóbə maysə]

You didn't tell me a tall story?

14.5.3.5 **ניט** jumped to end during fronting

When a negative sentence undergoes object fronting for emphasis (→

§§14.4.7, 14.10), **ניט** is jumped to the end of the sentence for emphasis.

SAMPLES OF **ניט** IN OBJECT FRONTING INVERSION

ראָטשילד בין איך ניט I'm not Rothschild

דערהרגעט [derhárgət] האָט זי אים ניט She did not kill him

שול [shól] האָסטו ניט You don't have any sense

קיין נאַר [kinár] איז זי ניט She is no fool

14.6 PREDICATIVES

14.6.1 Positive predicatives

The positive predicatives are singular **ס'איז דאָ** 'there is', plural **ס'זײַנען דאָ** 'there are'. In the past and future, **דאָ** disappears. It is replaced by past participle **געווען** in the past and the appropriate part of **זײַן** in the future. When applied in the present tense to humans, the predicative can have the sense of 'just arrived'. Where **דאָ** '(over) here' occurs alongside **ס'איז דאָ** or **ס'זײַנען דאָ**, the resulting sequences **ס'איז דאָ דאָ** 'there is (over) here' and **ס'זײַנען דאָ דאָ** 'there are (over) here', are retained.

→ איך וויל נישט [khvéysnit] I don't know
 טאמער נישט, וויל איך נישט [tòmərnt | véysikhnit]
 If not, then I don't know

→ ע'ס וויל נישט [stóygnit] It's no good
 און אזי יאן וויל עס במילא נישט [unazyó | toygəs bəméyle nit]
 And if so (/if yes), it's no good anyway

14.4.5.1 Inversion in the if-clause

Where there is no word (adverb, prepositional phrase or conjunction) to signify the concept 'if' in the if-clause, inversion is invoked in the if-clause. Inversion in the if-clause itself serves to supply the concept 'if'.

SAMPLES OF INVERSION IN THE IF-CLAUSE

קומט זי, קום איך אויכעט [kumdzi | kum kha óykhəst]
 If she comes, then I'll come too

ויל מען גיין, טאן לאמיר גיין [vímən géyn | talómir géyn]
 If we want to go, then let's go

גיי איך ביסטו אין בעס, גיי איך נישט ביסטו אויך אין בעס [inkás]
 If I go, you're angry; If I don't go, you're also angry

14.4.6 Interrogative inversion

Interrogatives trigger inversion (→ §§11.2 – 11.3).

14.4.7 Fronting inversion

Any word that is fronted (brought forward) to the beginning of a sentence for

present singular

there is [sídó / sɪdó] ס'איז דאָ

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT SINGULAR PREDICATIVE

There's a theatre in town ס'איז דאָ אַ טעאָטער אין שטאָט

Shlóymə is here / Shlóymə has just arrived ס'איז דאָ [sɪdó dó] שלמה

present plural

there are [(s)záynən dó] ס'זינען דאָ

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT PLURAL PREDICATIVE

There are many students here ס'זינען דאָ אַ סך סטודענטן דאָ

Are the guys here yet? ס'זינען שוין דאָ די חברה? [khévre]

past singular

(there / it) was [sɪgəvén / sɔɪz gəvén] ס'איז געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST SINGULAR PREDICATIVE

It was a nice day ס'איז געווען אַ שיינער טאָג

Was Síme here? ס'איז דאָ געווען סימע?

past plural

there were [(s)záynən gəvén] ס'זינען געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST PLURAL PREDICATIVE

There were many robbers ס'זינען געווען אַ סך רויבער [asákh]

Were Síme and Záimən there? ס'זינען געווען סימע און זלמן?

future singular

there will be [sitzáyn / sávet záyn] זײַן ס'וועט

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE SINGULAR PREDICATIVE

It will turn out well זײַן גוט ס'וועט

Khána will be there זײַן דאָרטן חנה ס'וועט

future plural

there will be [sáin záyn / sáein záyn] זײַן ס'וועלן

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE PLURAL PREDICATIVE

There will be students there זײַן דאָרטן סטודענטן ס'וועלן

Khána and Shmúel will be there זײַן דאָרטן חנה און שמואל ס'וועלן

14.6.2 Negative predicatives

In the present tense, the negative predicatives are ס'איז נישט (or נישטאָ) 'there isn't' and ס'זײַנען נישטאָ 'there aren't'. In the past – ס'איז נישט געווען 'there wasn't' and ס'זײַנען נישט געווען 'there weren't'. Future forms are ס'וועט זײַן נישט 'there won't be', plural ס'וועלן זײַן נישט. In colloquial speech it is common to use the singular forms for both singular and plural. If the negative predicative has an indefinite object, the indefinite article disappears and is replaced by קײן. When the object is a personal name, קײן is omitted unless the proper name is being treated as a common noun, for identification of a stranger or humorously for a familiar individual (cf. 'Isn't there a Joe around?'). When the object has a definite article, the definite article is retained in the negative and no קײן appears, unless the sense of

'any' or 'none at all' is required, in which case קיין replaces the definite article.

present singular

there is no [sinitó / siz nitó / səlz nitó] ס'איז ניטאָן

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT SINGULAR NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There isn't a theatre in town ס'איז ניטאָן קיין טעאָטער אין שטאָט

The theatre doesn't exist any more ס'איז ניטאָן מער דער טעאָטער

Shlóyme is not here / Shlóyme hasn't arrived ס'איז ניטאָן דאָ שלמה

There is no Shloyme here ס'איז ניטאָן דאָ קיין שלמה

present plural

there are no [(s)záynən nitó] ס'זינען ניטאָן

SAMPLES OF THE PRESENT PLURAL NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There aren't many students here ס'זינען ניטאָן דאָ קיין סך סטודענטן

Our friends aren't here yet? ס'זינען נאָך ניטאָן די חברים? [khavéyrim]

past singular

there wasn't any [sinigevén / s(ə)lz nít gevén] ס'איז נישט געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST SINGULAR NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

It wasn't a nice day ס'איז נישט געווען קיין שינער טאָג

Wasn't Síma here? ס'איז נישט געווען דאָ סימא?

past plural

there were no [(s)záynən nigevén / nit gevén] ס'זינען נישט געווען

SAMPLES OF THE PAST PLURAL NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There weren't many robbers **רױבער [kínsák] קיין סך**
 Were Síme and Zálman not there? **ס'זינען נישט געווען סימע און זלמן?**

future singular

There won't be **[sətnitzáyn / səvet nit záyn] זיין**

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE SINGULAR NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

It won't turn out well **ס'וועט נישט זיין גוט**
 Kháne won't be there **חנה וועט נישט זיין דאָרטן**

future plural

there won't be **[səln ni(t)záyn / svein nít záyn] זיין**

SAMPLES OF THE FUTURE PLURAL NEGATIVE PREDICATIVE

There won't be any students there **סטודענטן קיין**
 Kháne and Shmúel won't be there **און שמואל**

14.7 RELATIVES

Relatives 'who' and 'that/which' replace the subject they refer to. The inflected verb usually follows the relative and is thus maintained in second position within the relative phrase (the subsentence launched by the relative), in conformity with the inflected-verb-second rule. The relatives are uninflecting **וואָס** and inflecting **וועלכער**. Its inflection follows the same anomalous pattern of interrogative **וועלכער** (→ §11.3.1.1). **וואָס** and **וועלכער** are frequently but not always interchangeable. While **וועלכער** occurs in all

three cases, *וואס* is limited to nominative and accusative. When referring to people, both *וואס* and *וועלכער* may be replaced in either object case by *וועמען* 'whom', which does not inflect for number or gender.

SAMPLES OF RELATIVES IN NOMINATIVE

דער טיש וואָס וועלכער שטייט דאָ איז אַ שיינער

The table that stands here is a pretty one

די פֿרוי וואָס וועלכע זיצט דאָרטן איז מ׳ן פּראָפּעסאָרשע [profesorshə]

The woman sitting over there is my professor (f.)

דאָס ליד וואָס וועלכע איז זייער שיין איז צו לאַנג אויף איצטער

The poem, which is very beautiful, is too long for now

די מענטשן וואָס וועלכע קומען זינען מינע גוטע פֿרײַנד

The people who are coming are my good friends

SAMPLES OF RELATIVES IN ACCUSATIVE

דעם טיש וואָס וועלכן איך האָב געקויפֿט איז אַ שיינער

The table I bought is a pretty one

די פֿרוי וואָס וועלכע איך זע דאָרטן איז מ׳ן פּראָפּעסאָרשע

The woman I see over there is my professor (f.)

דאָס ליד וואָס וועלכע די פּעטעסע האָט אָנגעשריבן איז זייער שיין

The poem, which the poetess wrote is very beautiful

די מענטשן וואָס וועלכע זע זינען מינע גוטע פֿרײַנד

The people whom I see are my good friends

SAMPLES OF RELATIVES IN DATIVE

דער טיש פֿון וועלכן איך האָב גערעדט שטייט דאָ
 The table of which I was speaking is standing over here

די פֿרוי מיט וועלכער איך רעד איז מ׳רופֿט אַ פּראָפּעסאָרשע
 The woman with whom I am speaking is my professor (f.)

דאָס ליד ווען וועלכן דו האָסט געלייענט איז זייער שיין
 The poem of which you read is very beautiful

די מענטשן צו וועלכע איך גייע זינען מינע גוטע פֿרײַנד
 The people to whom I am going are my good friends

14.7.1 וואָס as subordinate phrase launcher

Unlike its English counterpart, relative וואָס can launch a subordinate sentence.

SAMPLES OF וואָס AS A SUBORDINATE PHRASE LAUNCHER

די מענטשן וואָס מיט זיי קען מען נישט רעדן זינען היידער דאָ
 The people with whom one cannot communicate (lit. 'the people that with them one cannot talk') are here again

דער דאָקטער וואָס איך קען אים איז היינט אָנגעקומען
 The doctor whom I know (lit. 'that I know him') arrived today

14.8 REFLEXIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Reflexive verbs are formed by putting the subject, usually human, with all its

articles and adjectives into dative (→ §5.1.3, 5.3.3, 5.5.3). As it happens, the minority of Yiddish nouns that do inflect (→ §5.14) are human designators – intimate nouns (→ §5.14.1), proper names (→ §5.14.2) and personal pronouns (→ §6.1.3). The noun phrase, appropriately inflected for dative, is linked to the verb via the third person singular of זײַן (→ §7.7.1): איז in the present, (זײַנען / געווען) in the past, and וועט זײַן (plural וועלן זײַן) in the future. The literal sense of reflexivity is therefore ‘it is / was / will be something to somebody’. Many verbs just happen historically to take the reflexive. They denote states of being or feeling rather than actions per se. A number of reflexives are formed with ווערן ‘become’ (→ §9.1.7) rather than זײַן. Note that the passively constructed געוועלן ווערן (→ §15.5.6) takes the reflexive.

SAMPLES OF USE OF THE REFLEXIVE

- I’m o.k.; all is well with me; I’ve got it good מיר איז גוט
 She’s feeling cold מיר איז קאַלט
 Martin is feeling hot מאַרטין איז הייס
 Father is feeling cool outside דעם טאָטן איז קיל אין דרויסן
 Grandmother is feeling warm today דער באָבען [מאָמאָ] איז הייסט וואָרעם
 She likes him [er gəfəlt] ער געפֿעלט מיר
 She once liked him more אַמאָל איז ער מיר מער געפֿעלן געווען
 Blumka likes Nosen [nósen] בלוּמקען געפֿעלט נאָסן
 He likes her [zi gəfəltəm] זי געפֿעלט אים
 He once liked her more אַמאָל איז זי אים מער געפֿעלן געווען
 Sender likes Kháyke סענדערן געפֿעלט חיהקע
 You don’t know how good you had it דו ווײַסט נישט ווי גוט ס’איז דיר געווען
 It will be difficult for us next year איבערמאָרגען וועט אונדז זײַן שווער
 Are you getting fed up? [náməs] ס’ווערט דיר שוין נאָמאָס?
 Here you’ll find it better דאָ וועט דיר בעסער ווערן

14.9 THE DOUBLE VERB CONSTRUCTION

The use of the infinitive followed by the same verb in its appropriately inflected form, with inversion, is a popular device for denoting contrast or habitual activity. For the small minority of verbs where the first person plural differs from the infinitive, the double verb construction follows the first person plural (e.g. *ווייטן* rather than *ווייטן* rather than *ווייטן*).

SAMPLES OF THE DOUBLE VERB CONSTRUCTION

טראָסטן טראָסט ער אָבער אַרבעטן אַרבעט ער ניט

He does think, but he certainly doesn't do any work (lit. 'but work he doesn't')

לאַכן לאַכן מיר אָבער קאָמיש איז עס ניט

We do laugh but it's not funny (lit. 'but funny it's not')

קומען קומט זי יעדע נאַכט אַזייער עלף

She comes every night at eleven o'clock

14.9.1 The discontinued double verb construction

A double verb construction with no follow-on tends to imply dissatisfaction, or to provide implicit criticism or irony, the nature of which is evident from context.

SAMPLES OF THE DISCONTINUED DOUBLE VERB CONSTRUCTION

[kúmen | kúmt er] ... קומען קומט ער ...

He will most certainly come (but...)

[lákhn | lákhtzi] ... לאַכן לאַכט זי ...

She certainly is laughing (but...)

14.9.2 The double infinitive construction

An infinitive fronted to the beginning of the sentence for emphasis (→ §§14.4.7, 14.10) may be repeated in an inverted phrase following upon it. The construction has implicit but powerful comparative force.

SAMPLES OF THE REPEATED INFINITIVE

One can certainly laugh (but.....) לאַפֿן קען מען לאַפֿן
They will certainly try (but...) זיין פּראָבירן זיין פּראָבירן

14.10 VARIABILITY OF WORD ORDER

Subject to the constraints outlined in this chapter, word order can vary dramatically depending both on rhythmic factors and the speaker's wish to lay greater stress on one of the several parts. Most frequently, the part of the sentence brought up to the front marks its semantic prominence. Apart from inflected verbs which are assigned to second position, nearly anything can be brought up to the front. And even inflected verbs may be brought up front to create a dramatic exclamation. The item at the end may also carry greater or greatest stress, depending on intonation (or, in written texts, context). Items in the middle generally have less emphasis.

SAMPLES OF VARIABILITY OF WORD ORDER

I have enough apples איך האָב נענוג עמל
I have *enough* apples נענוג עמל האָב איך
I have *enough apples* נענוג האָב איך עמל
I have enough *apples* עמל האָב איך נענוג
Do I have enough apples! האָב איך נענוג עמל?

We can't come now מיר קענען נישט קומען איצטער
We can't come *now* איצטער קענען מיר נישט קומען

איצטער קומען קענען מיר נישט We can't actually *come now*

קומען קענען מיר נישט איצטער We can't actually *come now*

קומען איצטער קענען מיר נישט We *can't* come now

קענען מיר איצטער נישט קומען We just *can't* come now!

קענען מיר נישט קומען איצטער! We just *can't* come *now*!

15 SEMANTICS

15.0 OVERVIEW

The notes in this chapter provide acquaintance with a number of semantic distinctions that have no direct correlates in English.

15.1 'AT'

The most frequent equivalent of 'at' is **בֵּי** [be]. **בֵּי** also translates 'from' that ascribes learning something from somebody or studying with or under somebody. **בֵּי** has a number of additional uses which must be mastered case by case. **בֵּי** regularly conflates with the dative definite article **דֵּעַם**, giving **בֵּיִם** [bam] (→ §5.3.3.1).

EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF **בֵּי**

דָּעַם הָאָס ער נעלערנט **בֵּיִם** [bam] זיידן

He learned this from his grandfather

מיר הָאָס שטודירט **בֵּי** אַ גרויסן מרפֿעסאָר

We studied under a great professor

בֵּי זיי איז אָנדערש

Things are different with them

איך הָאָב געהאוינט **בֵּי** אים [ba em] צוויי יאָר

I lived at his place for two years

ב' זי אין דער היים איז וואָרעם

It's warm in their house

ביסט געווען ביים דאָקטער?

Have you been to see the doctor?

15.2 'FROM'

פֿון translates most instances of 'of', hence טייל פֿון דעם 'part of it'; most instances of 'from', hence אָנטלאָפֿן פֿון אַלקאַטראַז 'I escaped from Alcatraz'; 'by' that ascribes authorship, hence אַ נײַ בוך פֿונעם זעלביקן 'a new book by the same author'.

15.3 'GO'

To walk or to go a conceptually short distance is גיין; to go by vehicle is פֿאַרן. Cf. איך גי' אַהיים 'I'm going home' (on the assumption that home is nearby) vs. איך פֿאַר קיין אויסטראַליע 'I'm going to Australia'.

15.4 'KNOW'

קענען is used for knowledge acquired by study, knowledge of languages, and acquaintanceship with humans or objects. וויסן, on the other hand, is used with reference to more general empirical knowledge of the world and in cases where there is no object (→ §9.1.16 on קענען as an analytic verb

former).

SAMPLES OF קענען VS. וויסן

She knows geometry well זי קען גוט געמאטעטיקע

She knows a little Turkish זי קען א ביסל טערקיש

He knows Bob well ער קען באבן גוט

He doesn't know the street very well ער קען נישט די גאס זייער גוט

I don't know איך ווייס נישט

I know how to answer איך ווייס ווי אַזוי מ'דאַרף ענטפֿערן

Do you know that man's name? צי ווייסט איר ווי ס'הייסט יענער מאַן?

15.5 'LOVE'

15.5.1 'Friend'

The neutral terms are פֿרײַנד (usually pronounced and occasionally spelled פֿרײַנט) 'friend (m.)' and פֿרײַנדיגע [fraynd(ə)] 'friend (f.)'. Both refer to platonic friendship. In addition, they may be used disingenuously about a romantic relationship which one is reluctant to divulge. Thus, when a woman says זיין פֿרײַנד she implicitly claims not to be involved romantically with the male friend referred to. Analogously, when a man says זיין פֿרײַנדיגע of a woman, he does so to stress the nonromantic nature of the friendship. To convey the general notion 'friend' of a person of the opposite sex, with no romantic undertones or implicit denials, the predicative possessive pronoun with indefinite article may be used, e.g. ער איז מינער אַ פֿרײַנד 'He is a friend of mine', זי איז מינע אַ פֿרײַנדיגע 'She is a friend of mine' (→

885.7, 6.2.1.5).

15.5.2 'Boyfriend' and 'Girlfriend'

חבֿר [kháver] 'friend (m.)' and חבֿרטע [khávartə] 'friend (f.)' (occasionally חבֿרטערן [khávartorn]) are synonymous with פֿרײַנד and פֿרײַנדיגע when referring to persons of the same sex. Thus for a woman speaking of her woman friend, חבֿר and חבֿרטע are synonymous, as are פֿרײַנד and חבֿר to a man. For opposite sexes, however, חבֿר and חבֿרטע have the sense of 'boyfriend' and 'girlfriend' respectively, most unequivocally so when used with possessive pronouns, e.g. איר חבֿר 'her boyfriend', דיין חבֿרטע 'your girlfriend'.

15.5.3 'Going out'

A traditional expression is גיין מיט אַרום (lit. 'go around with'), e.g. זי גיט מיט אים אַרױס [em] 'She's been seeing him for four years'. In English-speaking countries, the anglicism גיין מיט אַרױסנײַן [aróyzgeyn] (lit. 'go out with') is very popular. Its near-homophony with גיין מיט אַרױסנײַן [aróyzgeyn] 'die' is often exploited in jokes. The most universal phrase in use is simply גיין מיט (lit. 'go with').

15.5.4 'Lover'

'Beloved' or 'lover' is an inflecting nominalized adjective — געליבט, hence געליבטער [galípter] 'beloved (m.)'; געליבטע [galípte] 'beloved (f.)'; pl. געליבטע 'lovers'. They are often used in Yiddish where English would

have 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' although the semantic content of the Yiddish denotes a level of intimacy higher than חבֿר and חבֿרטע. There are a number of other terms which may be used for special effects, e.g. ליבהקבער (ליבהקבערין) in lighthearted jest (referring also to lovers of or dabblers in the arts); ליבסטער (ליבסטע), technically a superlative meaning 'most beloved', in folkloristic and poetic usage; ליובקחניק (ליובקחניצע) and ליובעניז, now archaic and used only to make fun of somebody else's relationship.

15.5.5 'Love affair'

אין אַ ראָמאַנץ or [román] אַין אַ ליבע, שטילן אַ ליבע may be used for 'have a romantic relationship / love affair'.

15.5.6 'Like' and 'love'

'Like' is expressed via a reflexive construction (→ §14.8). Subject 'likee' + געפֿעלט (חערן) + dative 'liker' combine, e.g. ער געפֿעלט איר 'She likes him', די געפֿעלט אים 'He likes her'. 'Love' is an analytic verb with ליב [loʔ] which imposes accusative, e.g. (→ §9.2.1), אַהבן 'She loves him', ער אהבט זי ליב 'He loves her'. An alternative to אהבן is ליב אהבן.

15.6 'PAPER'

A piece of paper is שטיקל פּאַפּיר [a štíkl papír], pl. פּאַפּיר. שטיקלעך פּאַפּיר. (צייטונגען) refers to a 'newspaper' (די) צייטונג.

learned or academic paper delivered before a conference or symposium (pl. רעפערעטן). A leaf of a book is בלאט; a single page is זייט or זייטל when not prefixing a specific number, e.g. אױף וועלכער זייט איז דאָס? = אױף - וועלכער זייט איז דאָס? 'On which page is it?'. When a page number is included, only זייט occurs, e.g. אױף זייט 92 'on page 92'. Its abbreviated form is 'ז' 'p.' but older .ד is still encountered).

15.7 'PARTY'

Traditional Jewish celebrations, most notably weddings, bar-mitsvahs, and circumcisions, are called שחח [s'mkhəs]. Some speakers expand the range of שחח to cover a party of any type. Others Yiddishize the Israeli Hebrew חסיבה [mæsiβə] to [mæsiβə], but neither option has gained much ground outside limited circles. A party characterized by the presence of single people and alcohol is a הויליגנקע [huilyánkə] (pl. הויליגנקעס). One that gets out of hand is a וואקסאנאליע [vakkhanáliyə], lit. 'orgy' but usually used humorously of any 'wildish party'. A traditional and universally acceptable way of expressing the modern notion of 'party' is a prepositional phrase rather than a noun – קומען אױף לחיים [iekháyems] 'come for (alcoholic) drinks'.

15.8 'QUESTION'

A simple question of fact that is swiftly answerable, e.g. 'Which way is Delancey Street?' is most frequently rendered by the analytic געבטן טאן (→ §9.1.9) lit. 'give an ask'. The most universal and middle-of-the-road

question is פֿראַגע 'question' (→ §4.2.2.1 on the semantic nuances of variant plural endings of פֿראַגע). An intellectually contentious question, implicitly or explicitly challenging a premise or argument, is a קשיא [káshe]. Finally, a traditional Jewish legal question asked of an appropriate (usually rabbinic) authority, most often on a matter requiring a yes or no answer, is a שאלה [sháyle]. Note the popular proverb אַז מ'פֿרעגט אַ שאלה איז טרייף [ame frékt a sháyle iz tréyf] lit. 'When one asks a question (of the rabbi as to whether certain food is kosher), the answer is that it is not kosher'. The proverb has the sense of 'If you ask permission the answer will be no (so go ahead and do what you please without asking)'.

15.9 'RIGHT'

For a human to 'be right' is זיין גערעכט or האָבן רעכט, e.g. דו ביסט גערעכט. For a thing (e.g. a statement, idea, book) to 'be right' is דאָס איז ריכטיק, e.g. דו האָסט רעכט - 'you are right'. The adjective 'right' is ריכטיק, e.g. דאָס איז ריכטיק 'that's right'. The noun 'right' is רעכט (דאָס), which has no plural. It is often used as a collective abstract concept, e.g. מענטשלעכע רעכט 'human rights'.

15.10 'SENSE'

'Sense' meaning 'logic' is שכל [séykhl], e.g. אין דעם איז נישט קיין שכל [indém initó kin séykhl] 'There's no sense in it'. 'Sense' meaning 'one of the possible meanings of a word or thing' is זיין, e.g. אין וועלכן זיין מיינטסטו דאָס? 'In what sense do you mean it?'. Sense as a specific human faculty, or one of the five senses, is חוש [khush] (pl. חושים [khúshim]), e.g. די האָט אַ גוטן

הויט וואמער 'She has a good sense of humour'.

15.11 'SOLUTION'

Solution to an intellectual question (e.g. קשיא → §15.8) is a תירוץ [térats], but note that in everyday use תירוץ may mean 'excuse'. אויסטאג [óytveg] may be used for a solution that is a 'way out' of a problem. באשײד [bashéyd] usually refers to the solution of a riddle or mystery in the world of ideas, and טגולױה [zgúle] (also 'remedy') to the solving of a more practical problem. The most generally applicable term is לײזונג. In popular usage, פאטענט [patént], lit. 'patent' is used approvingly of a promising or successful solution to a problem.

15.12 'TELL'

זאָגן is the most frequent correlate of 'tell', e.g. זאָג מיין 'Tell me!'. To 'tell (a story)' is דערציילן, e.g. [máysa] מעסע 'Tell me a story'. To 'tell' in the sense of 'convey information' is איבערנעבן, e.g. קענסטו מיין 'Can you tell me what was said?'.
איבערנעבן וואס מ'האט געזאָגט

15.13 'THE'

The definite article substitutes for possessive pronouns (→ §6.2) where possession is known, understood, or can be inferred from context. Thus, in a conversation with someone about his or her father, one would say דער טאטע

rather than *מאמע* *מין* (which is reserved for cases where there might be ambiguity). Analogously, the article is used with inanimate objects, e.g. *דער אויטאמאביל איז קאליע געווארן* 'My car has broken down' where possession is clear.

15.14 'THINK'

מאמע is the most general verb for 'think'. It may be modified by unstressed prefixes *בא-*, giving *באמאמע* 'think (about something specific); consider', and *דער-*, giving *דערמאמע זיך* 'think until a solution is found'. It also attracts stressed prefix *צו-*, giving *צומאמע* 'devise; come with (a solution)'. *מיינען* is to think in the sense of 'be of the opinion' and corresponds with its noun *מיינונג* (די) 'opinion'. *קלערן* and *רעכענען* may overlap with both *מאמע* and *מיינען*. *קלערן* has a more ponderous, considered mood about it. *אריינקלערן* generally has the sense of 'contemplate'. *רענקען* is rarely encountered in literary Yiddish. In journalistic prose and colloquial use, however, it is frequently used for *מיינען*.

EXAMPLES OF THE USE OF VERBS FOR 'THINK'

I think a lot about the problem *אין מאמע א סך מען דער פראבלעם*
 Man thinks and God laughs (proverb) *דער מענטש מאמע און גאט לאכט*
 Well, what are you thinking about? [*nu | vos trákhsta?*] *נו, וואס מאמעסטו?*

I have to think about it *אין דארף עס באמאמען*

I've come up with an answer *אין האב זיך דערמאמע צו אן ענטפער*

Have you come up with anything? *האסט עמעס צונעמאמעט?*

Well, what do you think? *נו, וואס מיינסטו?*

I have a different opinion *אין מין אנדערש*

I thought about it a lot *אין האב א סך געקלערט מען דעם*

15.15 'TIME'

צײט (דײַ) covers time in the general sense only. The sense of 'occasion; event; occurrence' is חזקל (דעם), hence לעטצע חזקל '(the) last time'. The equivalent of 'a good time' is the verbal phrase מאַרברענגען גוט [farbrøyngen] lit. 'spend the time well'.

15.16 'TO'

The usages covered by English 'to' correspond with a number of prepositions, depending on the nature of the prepositional object.

15.16.1 'To (a person)' = צו

Hence צו שלמהן [shlōymen] 'to Shloyme', צו דװירן [dvoyren] 'to Dvoyre', צו לערער 'to the teacher', צו דער מאַמען 'to mother'. צו is frequently omitted where it is the understood preposition in dative. Verbs concerned with human communication usually do not take צו, e.g. איך האָב איר געזאָגט 'I told her', איך האָב געזאָגט דער לערערין 'I told the teacher (f.)'.

15.16.2 'To (a physical object)' = צו

Hence, צו טיש 'to the table', צו באַם 'to the tree', צו בנין [binyen] 'to the building'.

15.16.3 'To (a geopolitical concept)' = אין [in] or קיין

Hence אין אָקספּאָרד 'to Oxford', קיין אָקספּאָרד or קיין אָקספּאָרד 'to Oxford'.

'to Paris' אין פאריז or קיין פאריז, אין סאַן פראַנציסקאָ 'to San Francisco'. If the place name happens to be a plural, or happens to include the feminine definite article די, only אין is used, hence די פאַראייניקטע שטאַטן 'to the United States', אין דער שווייץ 'to Lithuania', אין דער ליטע 'to Switzerland'.

15.16.4 'To (a place that is not a geopolitical concept)' - אין

Hence אין [fabrík] 'to the factory', אין באַנק 'to the bank', אין וואַלד 'to the forest', אין שטאָט 'to the city'. Cf. §5.3.3.2

15.16.5 'To (an event)' - אויף [af]

Hence אויף דער לחיה [av der khásena] 'to the wedding', אויף דער חתונה [av der leváya] 'to the funeral', אויף דער זיצונג 'to the meeting', קאָנגרעס 'to the congress / conference'.

15.17 JEWISH VS. GENERAL

Yiddish evolved as the language of Ashkenazic Jewish civilization over a millennium, coterminally with the cultures of Christian Europe. The language has a huge lexicon for traditional Jewish concepts, institutions and realia. All of these survive in full in traditional communities. There are, however, large numbers of items that survive both in literal and in metaphoric senses, in all varieties of Yiddish. There is also vocabulary to cover the civilization of Christian Europe specifically. Since the Westernizing movements of the nineteenth century, the language has been enriched by

large numbers of borrowings from German, Russian and the international 'Western repertoire' of secular internationalisms. The result is a two or three tier semantics. The following is a modest sampling.

15.17.1 'Bible'

תנ"ך [tanákh] 'Jewish Bible (i.e. the Old Testament)'

■

ביבל [báibl] 'Bible (in general)'

15.17.2 'Book'

סֵפֶר [séyfer] (pl. סְפָרִים [sfórim]) 'traditional sacred book'

■

בוך [bukh] (pl. בִּיכְעֵר) 'book (in general)'

15.17.3 'Conference'

אסיפה [asífe] (pl. אסיפות [asífes]) '(traditional) assembly / conference'

■

פֶּאַרזאַמלונגען (pl. פֶּאַרזאַמלונגען) 'assembly / conference (in general)'

15.17.4 'Expert'

בקי [bók] '(be) expert / proficient (in Talmudic studies)'

■

מומחה [múmche] 'expert / specialist (in anything)'

■

עקספערט [ekspért] 'expert (in anything)'

15.17.5 'Fool'

שומה [shóyta] (pl. שומים [shóytim]) '(Jewish) fool'

vs.

טיפש [tíפש] (pl. טיפשים [típschim]) '(esp. Jewish) fool'

vs.

נאָר [nar] (pl. נאָרענים [narónim]) '(any) fool'

15.17.6 'Genius'

גאון [gáon] (pl. גאונים [gəónim]) 'genius (esp. in Talmudic studies)'

vs.

עלוי [ól] (pl. עלוים [ólím]) 'young genius (esp. in Talmudic studies)'

vs.

געניע [génya] (pl. געניעס [gényes]) 'genius (in general)'

15.17.7 'God'

דער רבונ'סלעוולם [der rebóyne shelóvlem] 'God (viewed traditionally)'

vs.

דער רבונ'סלעלמא [der rebóyne deálmə] 'God (viewed traditionally)'

(used in learned style)

vs.

דער אײבערשטער [der éybersher] 'God (viewed intimately)'

vs.

טאָטע דיטער (lit. 'Sweet father' → 95.8.1) 'God (viewed very intimately)'

VII.

גאָט 'God (as universal concept)'

15.17.8 'Justice'

יוֹשֶׁר [yósher] '(traditional sense of) justice (in a specific case)'

vs.

גערעכטיקייט '(modern / universal sense of) justice'

15.17.9 'Pray'

דאַווענען [dávnen] 'say the traditional Jewish prayers'

vs.

תפילה טאָן [tʰilə ton] 'pray (in general)'

15.17.10 'Prayer'

תפילה [tʰilə] '(traditional Jewish) prayer'

vs.

געבעט [gabét] 'prayer (in general)'

15.17.11 'Rabbi'

רב [rov] (pl. רבנים [rabónim]) 'traditional rabbi'

vs.

רבי [rébe] (pl. רביים [rabéyim]) 'Chasidic rebbe'

vs.

ראַבבינער (pl. -ס; f. -ס; or -ס) 'modern rabbi'

vs.

רַבֵּי (pl. רַבֵּיִם) 'modern rabbi (in English-speaking countries)'

vs.

גֹּלֵם [gálem] (pl. גֹּלָמִים [galókhim]) 'priest'

vs.

גִּיטְטֶלענער (pl. -) 'clergyperson (of any faith)'

15.17.12 'Religious'

פֿרוֹם 'observant of traditional Judaism'

vs.

אַרטאָדאָקסיש 'neo-Orthodox; observant of (quasi-)traditional Judaism'

(used especially of 'modern' Orthodox groups)

vs.

רעליגיעז [religyéz] 'religious (in any faith)'

15.17.13 'School'

חדר [khdér] (pl. חדרים [khdórim]) 'traditional primary school'

vs.

שול (עלעמענטאַר) (pl. שולן) 'primary school (in general)'

15.17.14 'Synagogue'

שול (pl. שולן) 'traditional synagogue'

vs.

סינאַגאָגעס (or סינאַגאָגן) (pl. סינאַגאָגעס) 'modern synagogue'

vs.

קלויסטער (pl. ס -) '(specific) church'

vs.

קירך (pl. -ן) '(specific) church; the church in general (as an institution)'

■

מקום-תפילה (pl. [פּוֹלַט מַאָמָה]) 'house of prayer (in general)'

15.17.15 'Talmud'

גמרא [gemórah] 'Talmud (looked at from the traditional point of view)'

(technically גמרא refers only to the later Aramaic portions comprising the bulk of the Talmud but in traditional Yiddish usage, the term may refer to the whole of the Talmud → §§4.3.2.2, 7.3.2.1)

■

תלמוד [tálmud] 'Talmud (looked at from a modern scientific or secular point of view)'

15.17.16 'Teacher'

מלמד [melámed] (pl. מלמדים [melámdim]) 'traditional primary school teacher'

vs.

רבי [rébē] (pl. רביס [rébēs]) 'traditional school / yeshiva teacher'

■

לערער (pl. — or לערערין; f. pl. לערערין) 'teacher in general'

16 PHRASEOLOGY

16.0 OVERVIEW

The chapter provides introductory acquaintance with common idiomatic devices and a modest sampling of each. The categories are chosen to exemplify more general underlying strategies of Yiddish phraseology and idiomatic structure.

16.1 SIMILES

Stock similes with 'ו' 'like; as', are frequently used in both speech and writing. They are drawn from everyday life or from Jewish history.

SAMPLES OF SIMILES

געזונט ווי אן איזן [gezunt vi an ázn]
'healthy (/strong) as (a piece of) iron' (= 'very healthy / strong')

ווי גאט אין פאריז [vi gót in paríz]
'as God finds it in Paris' (= 'has it really good')
(var. ווי גאט אין אָדעס
'as God finds it in Odessa')

טויב ווי די וואנט [tóyb vi di vánt]
'deaf as the wall' (= 'very deaf')

מיאוס ווי דער טויט [míəs vi der tóyt]

'ugly as death' (= 'very ugly')

נאָט ווי אַ קאַץ [nás vi a káts]

'wet as a cat' (= 'very wet; drenched')

ס'וועט העלפֿן ווי אַ טויטן באַנקעט [svet hèlfn vi a tòytn bánkəs]

'It will help as much as cupping glasses (once used to draw blood to the skin as an alleged cure for numerous maladies) will help a dead person' (= 'hopelessly useless')

פֿאַנט האָבן ווי אַ שפּין [fàynt hobm vi a shpín]

'hate like a spider' (= 'hate intensely')

שיין ווי די וועלט [shéyn vi di vélt]

'beautiful as the world' (= 'very beautiful')

SAMPLES OF SIMILES FROM JEWISH HISTORY

גרויס ווי עוג מלך הבשן [gróys vi óyg méylekh habóshn]

'tall as Og King of Bashan' (= 'very tall'; cf. Deuteronomy 3:11)

געזונט ווי שמשון הגיביר [gezúnt vi shímshon hagíbir]

'healthy (/strong) as Samson' (= 'very strong'; → §5.8.1)

לאַנג ווי דער גלות [láng vi der gólae]

'long as the Jewish diaspora' (= 'very long'; → §13.2.5)

קלוג הי שלמה המלך [klóg vi shlòmáméylekh]

'wise as King Solomon' (= 'very wise'; often satiric; → §5.8.1)

רייך הי קורח [ráykh vi kóyrakh]

'wealthy as Korah' (cf. Pesachim 119a; Numbers 16; the Yiddish simile refers to the postbiblical legends of Korah's wealth rather than to the biblical account of his rebellion)

שיכור הי לוט [shíker vi lóv]

'drunk as Lot' (= 'very drunk'; Cf. Genesis 19: 30-35)

שלעמט הי ירבעם בן נבט [shlékht vi yeróvəm ben nevót]

'evil as Jeroboam' (= 'very evil'; cf. Kings I 11:26-14:20)

16.2 REJOINDERS

Stock rejoinders are drawn from a variety of sources.

SAMPLES OF REJOINDERS

אדרבא [áderaba]

'Of course!' (lit. 'to the contrary (I agree)'), i.e. 'Why shouldn't I agree?', hence 'Of course!')

אז די באַבע האָלט געהאַט אַ באָרד אין געזען אַ זיידע

[adi bóbe volt gehàt a bórd | völdzì gèvèn a zéyde]

'Stop saying // all the time!' (lit. 'If grandmother had a beard she would have been a grandfather')

חוי"א תי"ו [makh(ə)téysə / mékha téysə]

'OK!' (used to indicate agreeableness to a suggestion or proposal)

א נעלטיקער טאג [a nékhtukər tóg]

'No way it could be true!' (lit. 'yesterday's day')

קעלבערנע האטעלותו [kélberne hispáylos]

'What naive enthusiasm!' (lit. 'enthusiasm of a calf / fool')

א קשיא אויף א מעשה [akáshəf a máysə]

'Well, anything is possible!' (lit. 'a question on the veracity of a (made-up) story'; used to retract incredulity and concede a point; cf. §15.6 on קשיא)

16.3 SATIRIC CHARACTERIZATIONS

Anything in the language is capable of being turned around via the satiric rise-fall intonation (→ §11.1.1). Still, a number of characterizations have become part of a stock repertoire of ready-to-use epithets. They are often accompanied by raising of the head and eyebrows, and/or shaking of the head and upper part of the body.

SAMPLES OF SATIRIC CHARACTERIZATIONS

אן אינפאל [an áynfal]

'What a stupid idea!' (lit. 'an idea / notion / novel proposal'; has the meaning of 'what a brilliant idea' when uttered loudly with falling intonation)

אנטדעקט אמעריקעו [andékt amérike]

'Discovered America!' (used to mock a purported 'discovery' or 'innovation')

or the purported 'importance' of the information offered)

אַ גרויסער קנאַקער [a gróysər knákər]

'Big talker!' (lit. 'big knocker'; used to debunk a show-off, big-shot or person who has failed to pull something off)

זייער אַ גוטער חבֿירו [zéyar a gútar khávr]

'Some friend you are (/he is, etc.)!' (lit. 'a very good friend')

אַ חכֿמו [à khókhəm]

'What a fool (m.)!' (lit. 'a wise man')

אַ חכֿמֿטע [à khakhéyməstə]

'What a fool (f.)!' (lit. 'a wise woman')

אַ חכֿמה [à khókhmə]

'What a stupid thing to say!' (lit. '(a piece of) wisdom')

אַ נייע מעשה [a náye maysə]

'We've heard that one before!' (lit. 'a new story'; used to debunk the alleged novelty of a statement or discovery)

אַ ניינער חאָן [á íaynər mán]

'What a nasty fellow!' (lit. 'a nice guy')

אַ קליין ביטעלע טראָגעדיק [á kléyn bísalə trógədik]

'Very slightly pregnant!' (used to reply to an attempted mitigation of a situation that is in fact a yes or no issue)

אין קלייניקייט [éyn | kléynikayt]

'That's one little thing!' (used to debunk the allegedly minor importance of something and to argue that the point in question is in fact the heart of the matter)

אַ קראַסאַוויץ [á krasávits]

'Not a very good looking man/boy!' (lit. 'a handsome man')

אַ קראַסאַוויצע [á krasávitsə]

'Not a very good looking woman/girl!' (lit. 'a beautiful woman')

16.4 PROVERBS

Proverbs are frequently used in both speech and writing.

EXAMPLES OF PROVERBS

אַז מ'דאַרף דעם ננב נעמט מען אים אַראָפּ פֿון דער תליה

[amen dàl dem gánov | nēmtmən em aróp fun der tšíe]

'When the thief is needed, he is taken off the gallows' (i.e. it is permissible to associate with an undesirable person if necessity dictates)

אַז מ'קען נישט שרייבן זאָגט מען אַז די הען איז אַ שלעכטע

[aməkènit shráybm | zoktmən adi pèn iza shlékhtə]

'People who can't write say the pen is no good'

אַלעין גייט דער שוועטער באַרוועט [aléyn geyt der shùster bórvee]

'The shoemaker goes barefoot himself'

אַמאָל איז די רפואה ערנער פֿון דער חכה

[amòl idi refúa | èrgar fun der máke]

'Sometimes the cure is worse than the malady'

וואו מ'האָט דיך ליב גי חייניק, וואו מ'האָט דיך נישט ליב גי אין גאַנצן נישט

[vu məhot dakh lib gey véynik | vù məhot dakh nìt lib gey ingántsn nìt]

'Where you are liked, go seldom; where you are not liked do not go at all' (i.e. don't rush to accept invitations)

ווער ס'האָט די מאה האָט די דעה [ver səhòt diméya | hoti déya]

'Wealth is power' (lit. 'whoever has the hundred has the authority')

די מלאַכ'ים גייען נישט אַרום אויף דער ערד

[di malókhim gèyən nìt arùm af der érd]

'The angels don't walk about on earth' (used to allay disappointment in other people)

אַ נאַר בלייבט אַ נאַר [a nár | bláypt a nár]

'A fool remains a fool'

פֿרעג נישט דעם רופֿא פֿרעג דעם חולה [frègnit dem róyfa | frèg dem khóyla]

'Don't ask the doctor, ask the patient'

אַ קללה איז נישט קיין טעלעגראַמע [a klóla | iz nìt kin telagrámə]

'A curse isn't a telegram' (used to allay the anxiety of a victim of verbal abuse)

16.5 REDUNDANT INTENSIFIERS

In addition to adding emphasis, redundant intensifiers convey a rather humorous and happy mood, even in situations where the subject is one of gravity.

EXAMPLES OF REDUNDANT INTENSIFIERS

[avèggeyn ingántsn] אַוועקגיין אין גאַנצן
'leave entirely'

[dahàrgenen af tòyt] דערהרגען אויף טויט
'kill completely' (lit. 'kill to death'; by overuse the phrase has also come to mean 'beat up badly' and can be used to tease lovingly as a facetious threat)

[mashúge | afn gántsn | kóp] משוגע אויפן גאַנצן קאָפּ
'completely crazy' (lit. 'crazy in the entire head')

[farplóntert ingántsn] פאַרפּלֹנטערט אין גאַנצן
'completely confused; inextricably entangled'

[zikh tsúhern mit béyde óyern] זיך צוהערן מיט ביידע אויערן
'listen with both ears' (= 'listen attentively')

16.6 HISTORICAL METAPHORS

Historical metaphors are used both as complete sentences on their own, in reaction to a situation described, and as metaphors within a sentence.

SAMPLES OF HISTORICAL METAPHORS

איוֹבֿס צרות [ʔavs tsóras]

'Job's troubles' (= 'grave personal difficulties')

חושך מצרים [khóyshakh mitsráyim]

'the darkness of Egypt (during the Plague of Darkness)' (= 'very dark')

טעם נן-עדן [tám ganéydñ]

'the taste of the Garden of Eden' (= 'delicious')

יתרוס נעמען [yísroys néman]

'Jethro's names' (said of a person or place with many names; cf. Rashi's commentary at Exodus 18:1)

מ'פֿירט שטרוי קיין מצרים [məfírt shtróy kin mitsráyim]

'They're carrying straw to Egypt' (after the Israelites escaped their former slave labour which included carrying straw)
(= 'wasted energy'; cf. 'carrying coals to Newcastle')

חשה רבינוס שטעקן [móyshe rabéynuz shtékn]

'the rod of Moses' (said of something apparently miraculous; also to mock something allegedly impressive or to question the authenticity of a feat)

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GENERAL INDEX

- Acronyms 211–212
- Age 213
- Alphabet *xxiv–xxv*, 1–19, 208–212
- Aramaic *xvii–xx*
- Calendar 218–223
- Clock 67, 215–216
- Dates 220
- Days 219
- Dialects *xxi*, 38–40, 53, 105–106, 125–126
- Dictionaries 277, 280
- Folksongs 279–280
- Gematria 211
- Gestures 43, 44, 96, 188, 271
- Grammars 277–278
- Greetings 41–46
- Hebrew *xvii–xx*, 73
- Idioms 166, 188–194, 217–218, 268–276, 280
- Irony 164, 180, 188–194, 195–196, 249, 271–273
- Jewish history and tradition 42, 74, 88–89, 124, 188–194, 208–212, 219, 221–223, 262–267, 269–270, 275–276, 282–283
- Jewish holidays 42, 223
- Letter writing 84–85, 220
- Life cycle 213–215
- Love 68–69, 254–256
- Months 220, 222–223
- Numerology 211
- Orthodox usage 21–22, 42, 265–266
- Pejoratives 67–68
- Proverbs 211, 260, 273–274
- Seasons 218–219
- Semantics 252–267
- Sociology *xix–xx*, 21–23, 105–107, 282
- Soviet usage 22–23
- Time 215–221
- Yiddish books 283
- Yiddish language *xvii–xxi*, 280–281
- Yiddish literature *xvii–xxi*, 101, 125, 281–282
- Yiddish names 55, 68–69, 74, 88–89, 99–100, 101
- Yivo 4, 23, 212

GRAMMATICAL INDEX

Accentuation → Rhythm; Stress

Accusative 76, 79, 82–83, 104,
199, 246

Adjectives 81–97

Adverbs 178–194, 206, 230–233

Agentives 48–49, 51, 62, 73

Analytic verbs 156–177

Aspect → Perfective verbs

Aspiration 31

Cardinal numbers 201–204

Case 75–78; → Nominative;

Accusative; Dative

Comparatives 90–92

Compound nouns 70–74

Conditionals 160–161

Conjunctions 231–234, 268–270

Consonants 29–34

Dative 76–77, 79–80, 83–84,
100–101, 104–105, 199–200,
220, 247

Definite articles 78–81

Demonstrative pronouns 112–116

Devoicing assimilation 29–30

Diminutives 63–69, 95–97,
187–188

Diphthongs → Vowels

Double verb construction 249–250

Feminine gender 49–51

Fractions 206–208

Fronting 235–236

Future tense 138–140

Gender 47–53

If-then clauses 234–235

Immediate future tense 139

Imperatives 127, 130, 166

Indefinite articles 78, 86–87

Infinitive 121–122, 250

Interjections 188–194, 270–271

Interrogatives 197–200

Intonation 195–196

Inversion of subject and predicate
196–197, 229–241

Masculine gender 48–49

Negatives 126, 227–229,
238–241, 243–245

Neutral gender 51–53

Nominative 75–76, 78–79,
81–82, 103–104, 198–199, 246

Nouns 47–74

Numbers 201–212

- Numerals → Numbers 230–232
 Object pronouns 104–105,
 226–227, 237–238, 240
 Ordinal numbers 204–206
 Partitive pronouns 117–120
 Passives 163–165, 177
 Past participles 131, 132–134
 Past tense 131–138
 Perfective verbs 154–155
 Periphrastic verbs 175–177; →
 Analytic verbs
 Personal pronouns 103–107,
 226–227, 237–238, 240
 Phonetics 25–40, 67, 188,
 195–196
 Pluperfect future tense 140
 Pluperfect past tense 137–138
 Plurals 53–63
 Possessives 100–102, 108–112
 Possessive pronouns 108–112
 Predicate adjectives 85–87,
 91–92
 Predicatives 241–245
 Prefixed verbs 141–155
 Prepositions 80–81, 125, 182–183,
 185–187, 230–232, 220–221,
 230–232, 252–253, 261–262
 Prepositional phrases 185–187,
 230–232
 Present participle 122, 234
 Present tense 126–130
 Pronouns 103–120, 226–227
 Quantifiers 89–90
 Questions 195–200
 Reduced vowels 27–28
 Reflexives 124, 125–126, 247–248
 Relatives 245–247
 Rhythm 34–38
 Semitic component morphology
 57–58, 64, 68–69, 72–73,
 175–177, 183–184
 Semitic component phonology 36
 Slavonic component morphology
 57
 Spelling 1–24, 28
 Stress 35–36
 Stressed prefixes 144–154
 Subjunctives 165–166
 Subordinate phrases 247
 Superlatives 92–93
 Syntax 224–251
 Unstressed prefixes 141–144
 Verbs 121–177
 Voicing assimilation 30–31
 Vowels 25–28
 Word order → Syntax

INDEX OF SELECTED YIDDISH ITEMS

אַנט- 141-142	אַ 78, 82-84, 86-87
אַ סך 119	אַ ביטל 89, 118-119
אַם- 150	אַזעק 152-154
אַרעם 152-154	אויס- 147
באַ- 142	אויף 28, 80, 220-221, 262
בי 28, 80, 125, 183, 252-253	אויפֿ- 28, 147
ביי- 150-151	אומ- 148
גאַנץ 89	אונדזער 108-112
גין 139, 155, 253	אונטער- 148
גע- 131, 142-143	אַז 233-235, 258
געבן 156-159, 249	אַזוי 43, 197-198, 200
געזען 136, 241-245	אַט (אַ) 113-114
גערעכט 258	איבער- 148-149
דאָס 47, 51-53, 75-76, 78-80	איטלעכער 119-120
82-84	אין װ איינער װ איינס 117
דארפֿן 159	201-203
דו װ איר 103, 106-107	אין- 149
די 47, 49-51, 75-76, 78-81	איער 108-112
82-84, 259-260	אין 80-81, 160, 185-186
דיין 108-112	188-189, 220-221, 261-262
דיך װ דיר 104-105	איר 103-107, 108-112
דעם 76, 79-80, 82-84	אַלע 120
דער 47-49, 75-76, 78-80	אַם- 182
82-84, 259-260	אַנ- 149
דער- 143, 182-183	אַנדערער 114-115

- האָבן 131-132, 172-177, 258
 האַלטן אין 160
 האַלטן אין אין 160
 האַרץ 98
 חאו 197-198
 חאוהין 197-198
 חאַלטן 160-161
 חאַט 197-198, 200, 245-257
 חי 197-198, 200, 233
 268-270
 חייז 181
 חיסן 130, 249, 253-254
 חעלכער 198-200, 245-247
 חעלן 138-139, 140, 161-163
 חעמען 197-198
 חען 161, 233
 חער 197-198
 חערן 163-165, 177
 זאָגן 77, 127, 169, 259
 זאָלן 165-166
 זי \ איר 104-105
 זיין 108-111, 134-137, 175-177
 241-245, 247-248, 258
 זייער 90
 זיך 123-126, 225-226
 228-229, 237, 239
 זעלביקער 116-117
 זשע 130, 200
 סאָ 130, 200
 סאָן 167-169
 סאָר נים 171
 טייל 118
 טייערער 64-85
 יאָר 215
 יעדער איינער \ יעדערער 119
 יעדער איינציקער 119
 יענער 115-116
 לאָזן 170
 לאַמיר 170
 לערנען 77-78, 124
 מ' \ מע \ מען 103, 105-107
 מיין 108-112
 מיך \ מיר 104-105
 מינוט 215
 מוזן 170-171
 מעגן 171
 מערסטע 119
 נ \ ען 32-33, 53-54, 122
 128
 נים 126, 227-229, 236-241
 243-245
 נים קיין 126, 229, 240
 נעמען 171-172
 ס' \ סע \ עס 103-107
 ס'איז דאָ 241-243
 סאָמע 93

צו 261, 186, 125, 80
 צו- 151
 צווייטער 115-114
 צע- 144
 קומען 155, 136
 קיין 262-261, 240, 229, 126
 קיינער 118-117
 קענען 254-253, 172, 125
 ריכטיק 258
 שעה 215
 שרייבן 155-154

עטלעכע 118
 עמעצער 117
 -ערהייט 180
 פאָר 118
 פֿאַר 218, 194, 183, 125, 80
 פֿאַר- 143-144
 פֿאַר- 151
 פֿאַרן 253, 136
 פֿון 253, 187-185, 183, 102, 81-80
 פֿלעגן 172
 פֿרעגן 258-257, 78-77

